

 **TALIBAN AMBUSH** MEDAL OF HONOR HERO

# HISTORY *of* WAR



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**THE LIGHT BRIGADE'S RIDE TO DEATH OR GLORY**

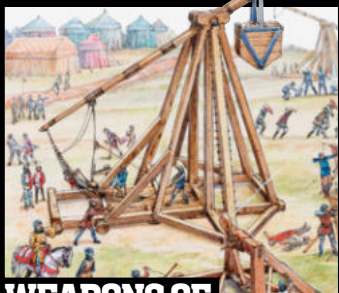
# CHARGE!



## PRINCE *OF* DARKNESS

Discover the Black Prince's  
ruthless rampages in France

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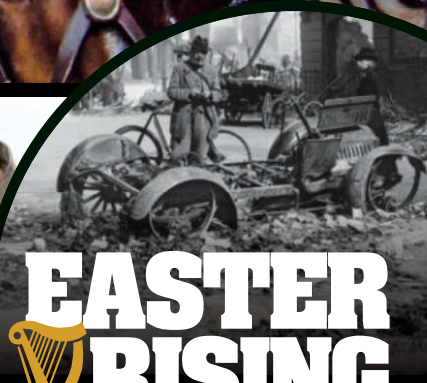
**WEAPONS OF  
SIEGE WARFARE**  
MEET THE MEDIEVAL ERA'S  
MEANEST WAR MACHINES



**THE BATTLE  
OF VERDUN: PART II**  
WHY DEVIOUS STRATEGY TURNED  
INTO APOCALYPTIC SLAUGHTER



**THE RISE  
OF KURDISTAN**  
HOW DID ONE REBEL NATION  
RE-SHAPE THE MIDDLE EAST?



 **EASTER  
RISING**  
ORIGINS OF IRELAND'S  
FIGHT FOR FREEDOM





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# Welcome

**“It is magnificent, but it is not war.  
It is madness”**

– Pierre Bosquet, French general at Balaclava,  
observing the Light Brigade’s charge

**O**n 25 October 1854, over 600 British light horse galloped headlong into a gauntlet of Russian cannon. The attack stood little chance of success, and many in the Brigade would be lucky to even survive. It was madness, surely, but was it really magnificent?

Thanks in large part to Tennyson’s famous beatifying stanzas, the legend of the ‘Noble Six Hundred’ is more often remembered than Balaclava, or even the obscure war in which they were fighting.

Some 60 years later, the mad slaughter of war would reach an as yet unprecedented scale, at

battlefields such as Verdun. Here, the imagined ‘magnificent’ or ‘glorious’ war was nowhere to be found – only madness and death.



*Tim*  
**Tim Williamson**  
Editor



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frontline@imagine-publishing.co.uk

## CONTRIBUTORS



### TOM GARNER

Things have been a bit grim and Medieval for Tom this month, as he trudged through the life of Edward, the Black Prince (page 84). To cheer himself up, he spoke with author Fearghal McGarry for his Easter Rising centenary feature (page 68).



### JONATHAN KRAUSE

Jonathan is back with the second of his two-part epic on the Battle of Verdun. This time he gets stuck into the shocking, and harrowing, events of the six-month campaign, which almost crippled both the French and German armies (page 36).



### NICK SOLDINGER

This issue Nick turns his characteristic wrath on the legend surrounding the Light Brigade, investigating the blunders that caused the disastrous charge, and the stories of the men who paid the ultimate price in the Valley of Death (page 24).

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*The Charge of the Light Brigade  
has become one of the most  
infamous moments in British  
military history*





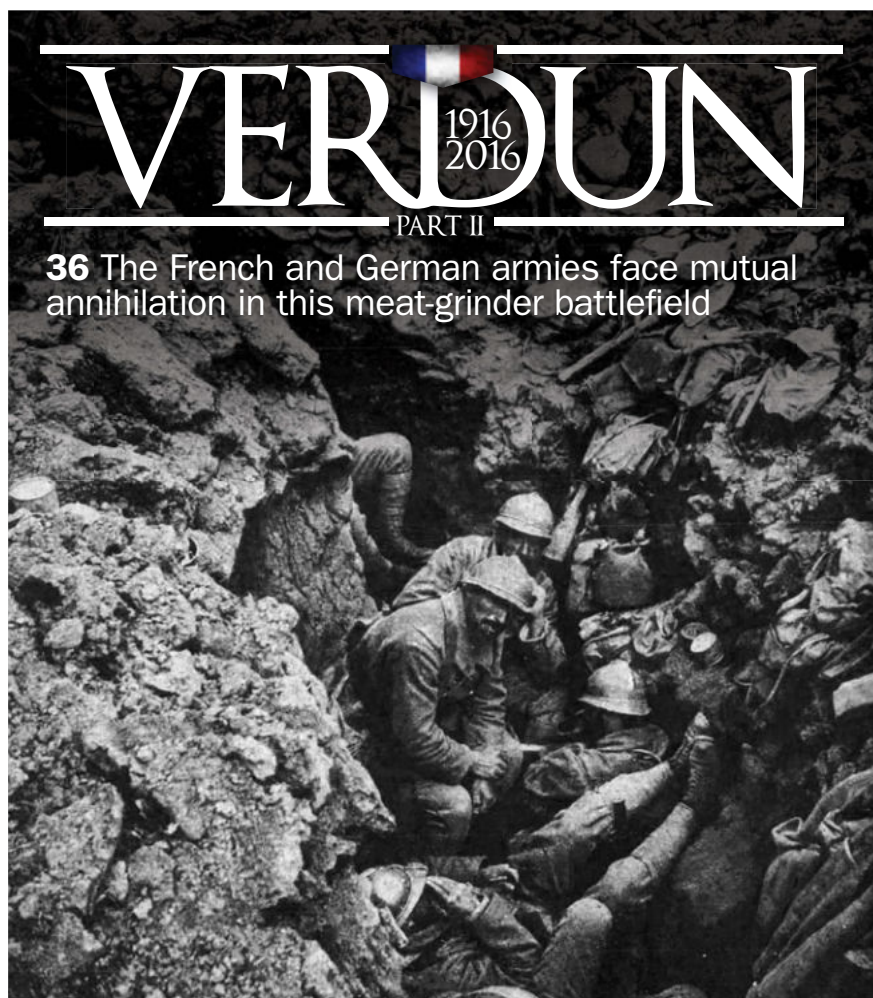


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Meet the only survivor of a Whippet that wreaked havoc behind enemy lines in 1918

# RISE OF KURDISTAN



**78** Why these underdog rebels are on the verge of victory



## WAR<sup>in</sup> FOCUS

### “I THINK WE GOT HIM...”

*Taken: c. 1941*

An Australian soldier observes the burning wreck of a German Ju 87, near Tobruk, Libya. The Siege of Tobruk lasted for over 240 days in 1941, significantly stalling the Axis campaign in the desert. Its garrison would eventually surrender after the British defeat at the Battle of Gazala in 1942.











## **WAR** **in** **FOCUS**

### **CLEARING NEUVE CHAPPELLE, 1915**

*Painted: c. 1915*

James P Beadle's engraving depicts the 2nd Rifle Brigade and 39th Garhwal Rifles taking Neuve Chapelle during the battle of the same name, 10 March 1915. The village was captured in the first hours of the offensive.









## **WAR**<sub>in</sub> **FOCUS**

### **'DO NOT OPERATE IN DEEP WATER'**

*Taken: April, 2000*

The wreckage of a US tank lies where it was disabled during the Battle of Saipan on 15 June 1944. Japanese occupation forces were well prepared for the invasion force, which suffered over 16,000 casualties.







# MEDIEVAL SIEGE WARFARE

The Middle Ages was the classic period for siege warfare, changing the course of history and displaying tactical brilliance



## JERUSALEM

13,500 Crusaders capture the Holy City from its Muslim garrison during the First Crusade. The besiegers construct three siege towers, scale the walls and massacre thousands of inhabitants.

1099

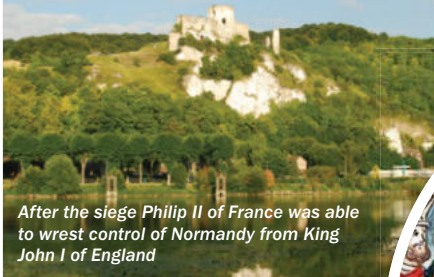
1203-04

1240

1304

## CHÂTEAU GAILLARD

The taking of this English-held castle over eight months was famous for the variety of tactics used by the attackers including mining, siege towers and Greek fire. Towers were even erected on ships and a successful attack made through a toilet drain.



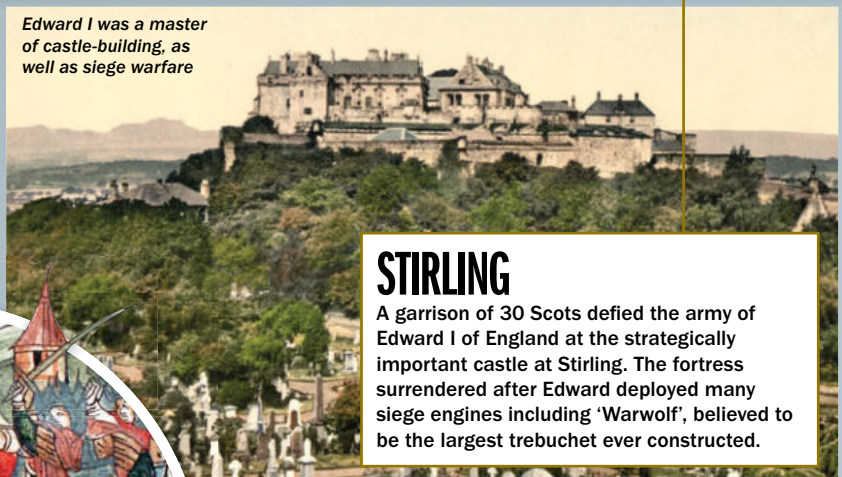
After the siege Philip II of France was able to wrest control of Normandy from King John I of England

## KIEV

Kiev was the culmination of the Mongols' second invasion of the Eurasian steppe. After an eight-day siege the city fell. The fall of the Kievan Rus' allowed the Mongols to invade Poland and Hungary.



Edward I was a master of castle-building, as well as siege warfare



## STIRLING

A garrison of 30 Scots defied the army of Edward I of England at the strategically important castle at Stirling. The fortress surrendered after Edward deployed many siege engines including 'Warwolf', believed to be the largest trebuchet ever constructed.

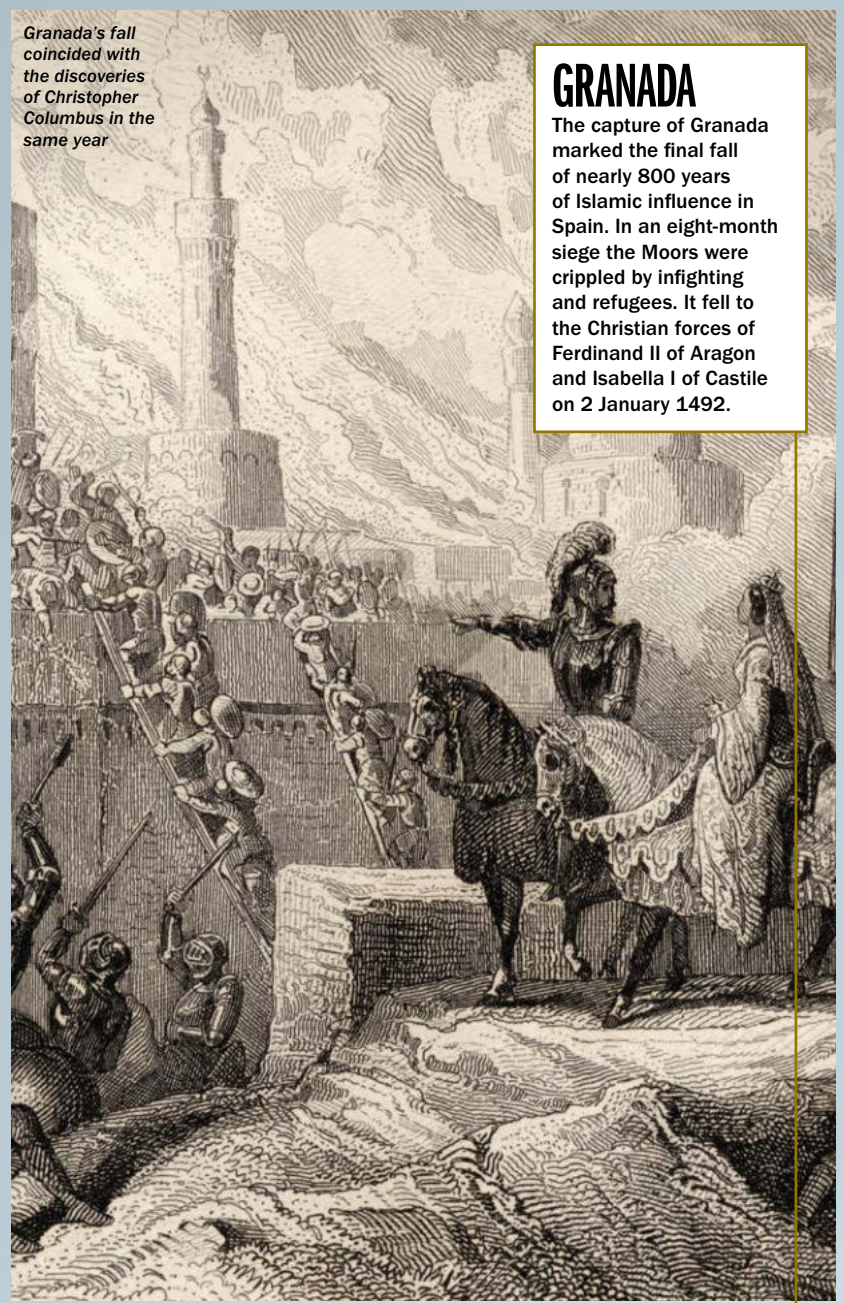
Left: The Mongols massacred the inhabitants of Kiev, reducing its population from 50,000 to just 2,000



Jerusalem would remain in Christian hands for 88 years after the siege of 1099



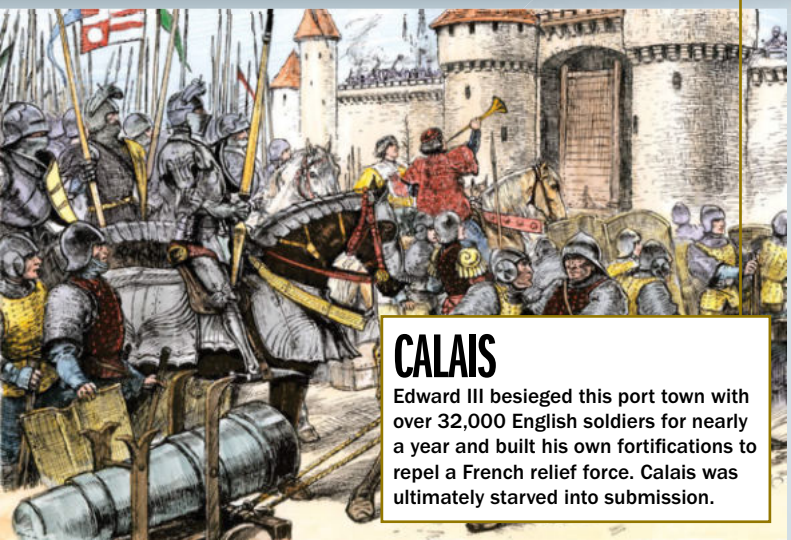
Granada's fall coincided with the discoveries of Christopher Columbus in the same year



**GRANADA**  
The capture of Granada marked the final fall of nearly 800 years of Islamic influence in Spain. In an eight-month siege the Moors were crippled by infighting and refugees. It fell to the Christian forces of Ferdinand II of Aragon and Isabella I of Castile on 2 January 1492.

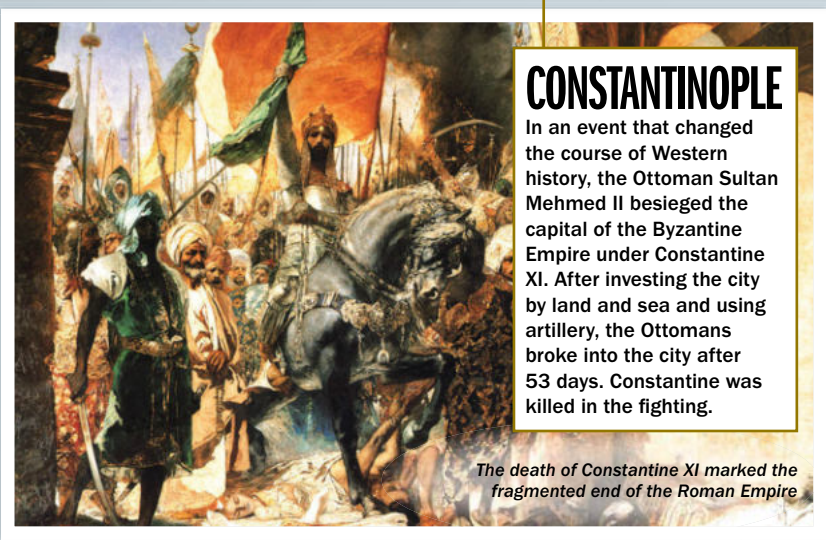
1491-92

1346-47



**CALAIS**  
Edward III besieged this port town with over 32,000 English soldiers for nearly a year and built his own fortifications to repel a French relief force. Calais was ultimately starved into submission.

1453



**CONSTANTINOPLE**  
In an event that changed the course of Western history, the Ottoman Sultan Mehmed II besieged the capital of the Byzantine Empire under Constantine XI. After investing the city by land and sea and using artillery, the Ottomans broke into the city after 53 days. Constantine was killed in the fighting.

*The death of Constantine XI marked the fragmented end of the Roman Empire*

Images: Alamy, Getty, TopFoto



# GLOBAL SIEGECRAFT

From mangonels and trebuchets to Greek fire and gunpowder weapons, siege technology innovations of the medieval world often originated in the east and then travelled west

**RUSSIANS USE 'WHEELS FILLED WITH FIRE' AGAINST CRUSADERS**  
TARTU, ESTONIA  
EARLY 13TH CENTURY

## 1 FAILED GOTHIC SIEGE OF ROME

**ROME, ITALY: MARCH 537 – MARCH 538**

After the Byzantine forces reclaimed Rome, the Ostrogothic army besieged the city. The Goths attack the fortifications but are repeatedly repelled by barrages of arrows until they give up and retreat.

## 2 THE VIKINGS ASSAULT PARIS

**PARIS, FRANCE: NOVEMBER 885 – OCTOBER 886**

The Vikings managed to overcome the fortified bridges of the Franks and reached Paris. The Franks keep the Vikings at bay with mangonels and ballistas until the emperor arrives at the capital and bribes them to leave.

**THE BYZANTINES CREATE FIRE-POTS**

THE BYZANTINE EMPIRE – 6TH CENTURY

**THE BYZANTINES DEVELOP GREEK FIRE**

THE BYZANTINE EMPIRE – END OF THE 7TH CENTURY

**AVARS INTRODUCE MANGONELS TO THE BYZANTINE EMPIRE**

CONSTANTINOPLE (ISTANBUL, TURKEY) – END OF 6TH CENTURY

**WEALTHY CITIZENS MOUNT MANGONELS ON TALL, SLENDER TOWERS IN ITALIAN CITIES (TORRI)**

ITALY – 12TH CENTURY

**BYZANTINES IMPROVE CONSTANTINOPLE'S FORTIFICATIONS IN RESPONSE TO COUNTERWEIGHT TREBUCHETS**

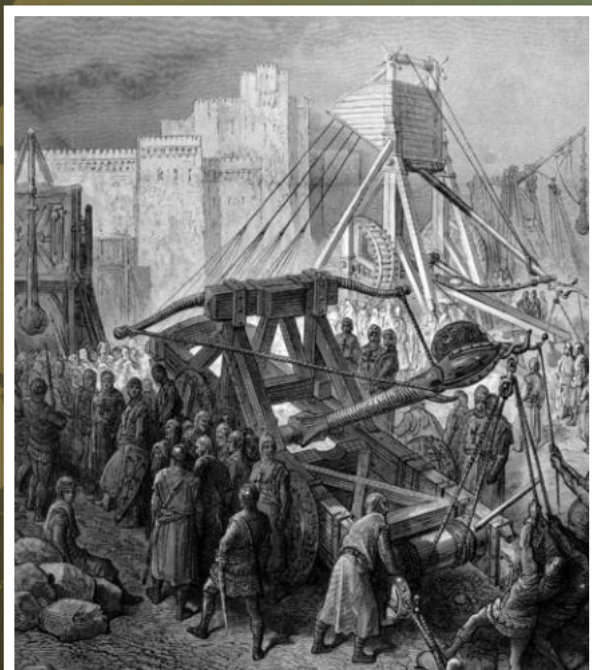
CONSTANTINOPLE (ISTANBUL, TURKEY)  
SECOND HALF OF THE 12TH CENTURY

**THE BYZANTINES SHOOT GREEK FIRE OUT OF TUBES**

THE BYZANTINE EMPIRE – LATE 9TH CENTURY

**THE BYZANTINES REPLACE HUGE, SIEGE SHELTERS WITH SMALLER, PORTABLE SHEDS**

THE BYZANTINE EMPIRE – MID-10TH CENTURY



Left: The crusaders gained entry into Jerusalem via their siege engines and began the slaughter of its population

## 3 THE CRUSADERS SACK JERUSALEM

**JERUSALEM, PALESTINE: 7 JUNE – 15 JULY 1099**

The crusaders approach Jerusalem with siege towers that had catapults mounted on them. The defenders try to fend off the assault with stone projectiles and Greek fire, but the mobile towers still allow the attackers to climb over the walls.

Left: A 20th-century depiction of the siege of Lisbon that shows the massive siege tower that intimidated the citizens into surrendering

## 4 MUSLIM LISBON UNDER SIEGE

**LISBON, PORTUGAL: 28 JUNE – 24 OCTOBER 1147**

After the fleet landed near Lisbon, the crusaders gradually captured the suburbs. However, a crusader siege tower becomes immobile, the defenders destroy five mangonels, and the crusaders fail to mine under the walls before their second tower convinces the Muslims to surrender.





## 5 THE CRUSADERS BESIEGE CATHAR TOULOUSE

**TOULOUSE, FRANCE: 8 OCTOBER 1217 – 1 JULY 1218**

The Toulousians are unable to fully restore the fortifications before the crusaders arrived. However, all the citizens help to drive off the assaults until it is said a woman kills the crusader leader with a stone shot from a mangonel.

## 6 CHINESE EXPLOSIVES AT SIEGE OF KAIFENG

**KAIFENG, NORTHERN CHINA: APRIL 1232 – FEBRUARY 1233**

The Mongols put the Jin capital under siege with sapping trenches and siege engines. The Jin use gunpowder proto-bombs that affected a 100 square metre area and bamboo proto-flamethrowers, but the Mongols still take the city after a year.

**ARABS ADOPT TRACTION TREBUCHETS, PRECURSOR TO THE COUNTERWEIGHT TYPE**

ISLAMIC EMPIRE – END OF THE 7TH CENTURY

**THE MONGOLS ADOPT INCENDIARY WEAPONRY**

MONGOL EMPIRE – LATE 13TH CENTURY

**THE MONGOLS ADOPT COUNTERWEIGHT TREBUCHETS**

IRAN – 13TH CENTURY

**ISLAMIC FORCES UTILIZE HUGE ESPRINGALS**

THE LEVANT – 12TH CENTURY

**INCENDIARY WEAPONS BECOME WIDESPREAD THROUGHOUT INDIA**

NORTHERN INDIA – 13TH CENTURY

**CHINESE DEVELOP PROTO-INCENDIARY ROCKETS AND FIRE LANCES**

CHINA – 13TH CENTURY

**VIETNAMESE RULERS HIRE MUSLIM EXPERT ARTILLERYMEN**

SOUTHERN VIETNAM – 13TH CENTURY



Above: An illustration from the 19th century that depicts the crusader leader, Simon de Montfort, being killed by a rock at the siege of Toulouse on 25 June 1218



Left: A 14th-century painting of the assault on Baghdad showing Mongol siege craft

## 7 THE MONGOL CONQUEST OF BAGHDAD

**BAGHDAD, IRAQ: 29 JANUARY – 10 FEBRUARY 1258**

After the Mongols defeat an Arab army, they completely surround Baghdad with boat-bridges over the Tigris River. The besiegers use large catapults to break through the walls and force the caliph to surrender.

## 8 MEDIEVAL BIOLOGICAL WARFARE AT CAFFA

**FEODOSIA, CRIMEA: 1344-47**

The Tartars besiege the Genoese colony of Caffa. During the siege, the Black Death infects and kills many of the attackers so they catapult the corpses into the city, causing the inhabitants to flee and bring the disease with them to Europe.



# ENGLAND'S LONGEST SIEGE

How the giant rebel fortress of Kenilworth Castle withstood an epic six-month struggle in 1266



Above: Jan Cooper is a local historian and Kenilworth Castle expert

**K**enilworth Castle was the stronghold of the rebel noble Simon de Montfort during the Second Barons' War (1264-67). When de Montfort was defeated and killed by Henry III at the Battle of Evesham in August 1265, his surviving supporters fled back to Kenilworth and prepared for the eventual vengeance of the king.

Here, Chairman of Kenilworth History and Archaeology Society, Jan Cooper, explains just how the castle, and its hundreds of defenders, survived Henry III's siege.

## WERE THE CASTLE'S DEFENCES PREPARED FOR A LENGTHY SIEGE?

They had been well prepared because King John had made major improvements 50 years earlier, including the massive water defences known as the 'Mere'. Simon de Montfort already had siege machines at the castle in the early 1260s. After Evesham, his son, Simon, was one of the rebels returning to Kenilworth

and he immediately started stocking and provisioning the castle. The siege machines were presumably trebuchets. The rebels went into the surrounding area and reportedly pillaged and looted.

They certainly collected foodstuffs and supplies to stock the castle in readiness for a siege, and they continued to keep it stocked even though it was many months before the siege actually happened. By that time, young Simon was no longer at the castle but the garrison commander, Sir Henry de Hastings continued to keep it ready.

## HOW DID THE SIEGE BEGIN?

De Montfort's supporters had congregated at Kenilworth. The king tried to persuade them to leave the castle. He had been victorious at Evesham and could afford to be benevolent. He promised that if they left immediately they would not be disinherited or lose their lives. They didn't believe him, so he changed tactics and disinherited all of them.

In March 1266, one of the king's messengers was set upon by members of the garrison and had one of his hands severed. Henry was furious. The time for talking had come to an

end but the king was ill and the muster didn't happen until May when the army assembled at Northampton, arriving at Kenilworth sometime around 21-22 June. Henry stated that he would not leave until the castle fell.

## WHAT DO WE KNOW OF THE NUMBERS ON BOTH SIDES OF THE SIEGE?

There aren't specific numbers about the king's army but the call was sent out to all who owed allegiance to him right across the country. That would have been an awful lot of people and they in turn would have co-opted all the people who owed allegiance to them so it took a long time for the muster to collect. It must have been a very large army.

As for the defenders, we have recorded evidence that within the castle there were, "1,000 men of whom 700 were armed and dangerous, 106 women and an unknown number of servants." Looking at that there were probably in excess of 1,200 people. It was a big operation and in the castle they would have had livestock and horses so it would have been pretty crowded.

## WHAT SIEGE WEAPONS DID THE DEFENDERS AND BESIEGERS USE?

On the king's side they may have had trebuchets, ballistas and mangonels. We know he ordered barges for an assault across the

**"THE MERE DID PROVIDE FISH BUT IT WAS ALSO THE DISCHARGE POINT FOR MOST OF THE SEWAGE"**

The massive keep, dating from the early 1120s, formed the nucleus of Kenilworth's defence



# “THE REBELS WOULD SIMPLY NOT GIVE IN. THEY WERE CONVINCED THEY WERE GOING TO GET FRENCH HELP, IT SPURRED THEM ON”

Mere. The king’s siege tower was called, ‘The Bear’. Siege towers were designed so that men could be hidden inside and pushed towards the castle in order to fire their arrows without being shot at. This was not an easy thing to do considering the terrain around Kenilworth Castle. There are details of requisitions, which talk about equipment needed for building siege [machines]. The barges were requisitioned in Chester, and Henry also ordered thousands of crossbow bolts and arrows.

We don’t know how many trebuchets the rebels had inside the castle but, whenever they’re mentioned, it’s always as plural so more than one. In the 1960s, trebuchet balls were found outside the lower court of the castle, which had been thrown by the besiegers. A probable eyewitness called Robert of Gloucester said, “There was much killing on both sides with the taking of prisoners and much paying of ransoms to save their lives. With mangonel siege engines they bombarded each other.” How accurate that is we don’t know. It has also been suggested that the rebels collected up and reused some of the arrows and bolts that arrived from the king’s side.

## WHAT WERE CONDITIONS LIKE FOR THE DEFENDERS IN THE CASTLE?

It’s a big castle but with possibly 1,200 people and livestock in there it would have been very cramped and smelly. The Mere did provide fish but it was also the discharge point for most of the sewage. The garderobe in the keep discharged straight down the latrine tower. Where it went thereafter, one daren’t think!

It would have been pretty filthy with people in there for all that time. There was a deep and plentiful well for fresh water within the keep but food would have been rationed throughout the siege. We don’t know what they did with their dead, they couldn’t take them away. Did they



*Kenilworth as it may have looked in the 1570s. Even during its Renaissance heyday, the castle retained King John’s prominent architecture including the perimeter walls and towers along with the huge lake and its accompanying dam and outer bailey*

bury them? Did they stockpile them? Being in there was pretty much hell, especially through the summer months with the heat.

## WHY DID KENILWORTH CASTLE EVENTUALLY SURRENDER?

By the middle of November conditions seem to have deteriorated very quickly. Their food supplies had been running low for some time and were now virtually exhausted. They had eaten their horses and probably anything else that moved that wasn’t human. Disease, presumably dysentery, struck and spread rapidly through the castle.

A lot of people would have been in a weak state due to a lack of food. Those who were not killed off had no choice but to surrender. It was quick and not something they expected to happen. Around 13 December the king gave a safe conduct for them to leave the castle. The disinherited were given a chance to buy back their lands but with very heavy fines. The only people that were not allowed to walk out of the castle were the commander Henry de Hastings and those who had been involved in maiming the king’s messenger back in March. They were imprisoned at the king’s pleasure.

## WHAT WERE THE MAIN REASONS FOR THE LENGTH OF THE SIEGE?

There were several reasons why it lasted so long. King John had made an impregnable castle with water defences to the south and the west, a deep water-filled moat in the east and then defensive towers on the north side. He’d got outer earthwork defences, a barbican, and an outer gatehouse. It was even said that during the siege the castle’s gate was left open. This may be apocryphal but the idea was they were so secure that it didn’t matter. If anybody came along the top of the dam they were just picked off.

Also the rebels would simply not give in. They were convinced they were going to get French help, it spurred them on. They would probably have continued had they not ran out of food and had all of this disease. To last out for six months was pretty amazing. Also, Henry didn’t want to damage the castle because it belonged to him. It was like knocking your own door down to make squatters move out. He tried hard to get them out before bombarding it so that’s probably why the siege took so long.

*Left: Henry III of England became stubbornly determined to regain his castle from the rebels*



*Although it was drained in the 1650s, the Mere can still partially reappear around Kenilworth Castle after heavy rainfall*





# SIEGE WEAPONS

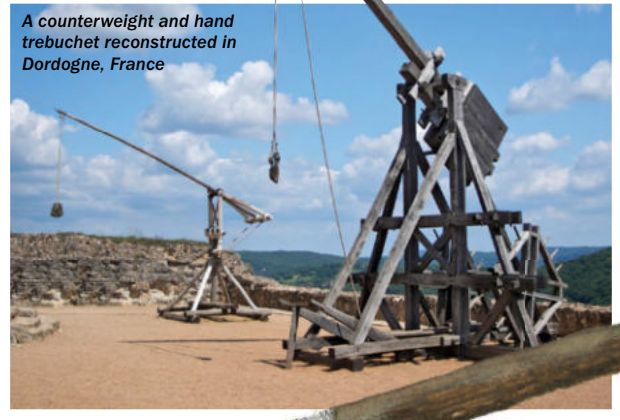
Although they required skilled labour to construct and operate, siege engines were incredibly effective in medieval warfare

**C**astles and other fortified settlements were a major part of the medieval world; therefore, many kinds of siege weaponry and equipment were developed and improved throughout the era in order to seize these strategic locations. The complexity of the various medieval siege weapons ranged from simple scaling ladders used to climb over walls, to the intricate and highly powerful trebuchets and cannon of the later Middle Ages.

## INFLEXIBLE DESIGN

Even though the trebuchet was certainly more accurate and effective than the earlier mangonels, it was much more difficult to not only change the direction the weapon fired, but also its range, due to the complexity of the design.

A counterweight and hand trebuchet reconstructed in Dordogne, France



## COUNTERWEIGHT TREBUCHET

This was the most effective projectile siege weapon of the Middle Ages before the cannon. Invented at either the end of the 11th century or in the early 12th, this design originated in the Middle East and by the 13th century was utilised throughout Western Europe.

**“THIS WAS THE MOST EFFECTIVE PROJECTILE SIEGE WEAPON OF THE MIDDLE AGES BEFORE THE CANNON”**

## VARIOUS SIZES

Some trebuchets were small and light enough to be placed on top of towers to protect fortifications. However, the ones used to besiege fortresses were often much larger.

## EFFECTIVE AMMUNITION

To be accurate, numerous stone masons were required to not only choose the right type of stone, but also make it into the right shape. For one Scottish-English conflict in the 14th century, 6 quarrymen and 37 masons needed to make hundreds of projectiles.

## HEAVY WEIGHTS

The counterweights used to launch missiles were often as heavy as 4.5 to 13.6 tons, while the stone projectiles the trebuchet fired were between 45 to 90 kg.

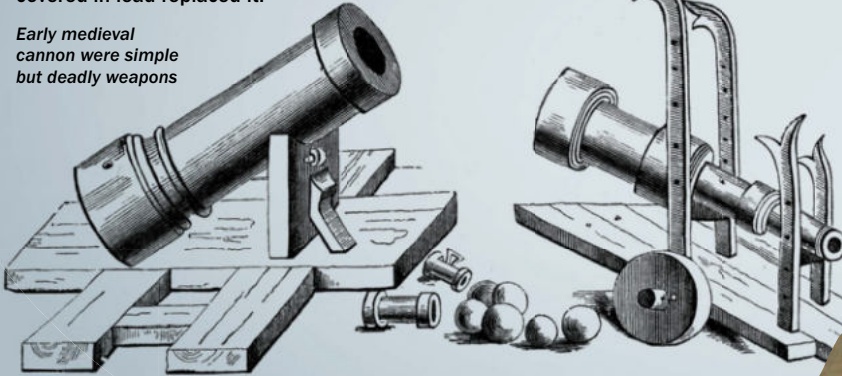




## EARLY CANNON

The first reference to a medieval European gun comes from the Florentine ordinance of 1326. Originally, guns were constructed with brass or copper but, by 1370, larger cannon were made of iron strips or sheets formed into tubes. The earliest ammunition used was an iron ball until stones covered in lead replaced it.

*Early medieval cannon were simple but deadly weapons*

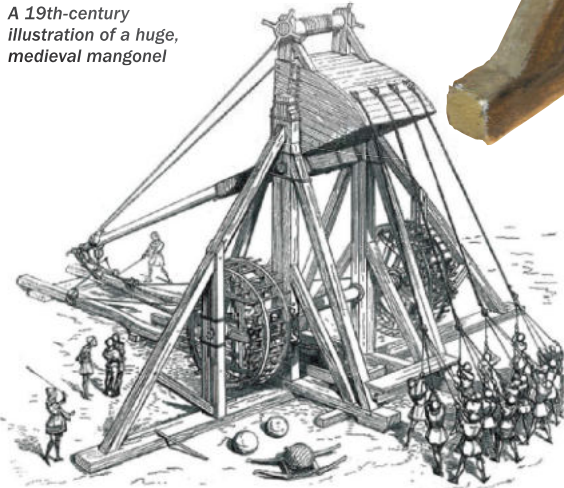


*These devices could hurl a variety of missiles including bolts, stones and even Greek fire*

## BEAM-SLING MANGONEL

Even though the beam-sling mangonel was invented as early as 5th century BCE in ancient China, the siege machine did not reach the Middle East until the 7th century CE. The stone-throwing engine then spread throughout Europe in the early Middle Ages until it was later replaced by the more accurate trebuchet.

*A 19th-century illustration of a huge, medieval mangonel*



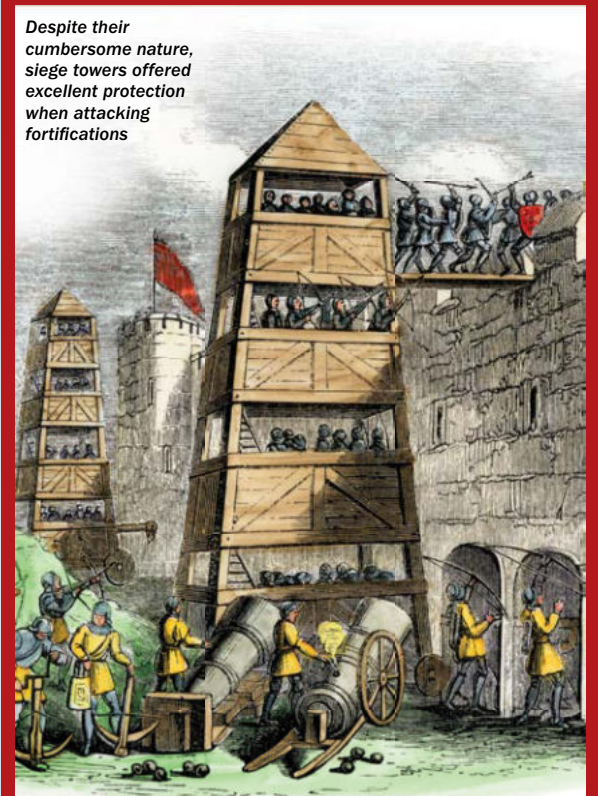
## TORSION-POWERED ESPRINGAL

The medieval espringal was a much larger, more complex version of a crossbow, similar to the torsion-powered siege machines of the ancient world. To fire the weapon, missiles were placed in the middle groove of the device and drawn mechanically, often by a screw or winch.

## SIEGE TOWER

Sometimes referred to as a belfry, medieval siege towers were enormous wooden structures that were built tall enough to reach the top of the walls of a fortress. Large wheels or rollers were used to push the towers up against fortifications. For besiegers to reach the upper levels, ladders were placed inside the towers.

*Despite their cumbersome nature, siege towers offered excellent protection when attacking fortifications*



*Images: Alamy, Jose Cabrera*

*Battering rams often had canopies added to offer attackers some measure of protection*



## BATTERING RAM

Medieval battering rams were essentially large tree trunks, often fitted with an iron head and held up by a structure made of wooden beams and wheels. To function, the siege weaponry required a crew to swing the enormous trunk at a door, gate or section of wall until it caused significant damage to the fortification.



# UNDERMINING CASTLES

A forgotten, but hazardous, aspect of large-scale sieges was the use of mining to demolish castle walls and towers

**M**ining was a subterranean response to end a siege if conventional weapons, such as trebuchets, battering rams and mangonels, failed to make an impression on the walls. Towers and keeps were particularly hard to destroy by conventional means, so miners would dig beneath them in order to weaken their foundations. Miners had a very dangerous job, as their digging efforts would initially be in plain sight of the garrison and to begin with they had to rely on the protection of a 'Cat'.

The Cat was a covered house placed on wheels with a very strong roof. The besieged garrison would always try to destroy this device, so the Cat was designed to withstand assaults from weapons as varied as heavy stones, beams of wood, hot water, molten lead and spiked poles. Under this portable cover the attacking force would dig beneath the walls. While they worked, the miners would build wooden supports to prop up the tunnel and once they were sure they had dug far enough, brush would be mixed with pig fat and placed near the wooden supports. When all of the flammable material had been placed in the mine, everybody would evacuate the tunnel except for the torchman who would set the place on fire, before also hurriedly departing. As the wooden supports burned, they would collapse and in theory the stonewalls or towers would collapse with them.

The digging and preparations were hazardous in themselves but miners were also at risk from prematurely collapsing tunnels and counter-mining activities from the enemy garrison. Defending armies attempted to detect miners by using buckets of water in suspected digging areas. When a potential mine was detected, garrisons would start digging their own tunnels to counter the miners' efforts. If these passageways ever connected then fierce hand-to-hand fighting would often ensue, which was especially dangerous in the weakly supported tunnels. Siege mining was definitely not for the faint-hearted.

## ROCHESTER, 1215 KING JOHN USES MINING TO WIN THIS FAMOUS SIEGE

Known to history as 'Bad' King John, the infamous English monarch has gained a reputation for military incompetence, but during the Siege of Rochester Castle he demonstrated a little-known talent for siege warfare. Rebel barons defended the fortress and the siege lasted for two months before surrendering to John. The fighting was fierce and without letup, with the *Barnswell Chronicler* recording, "Our age has not known a siege so hard-pressed nor so strongly resisted."

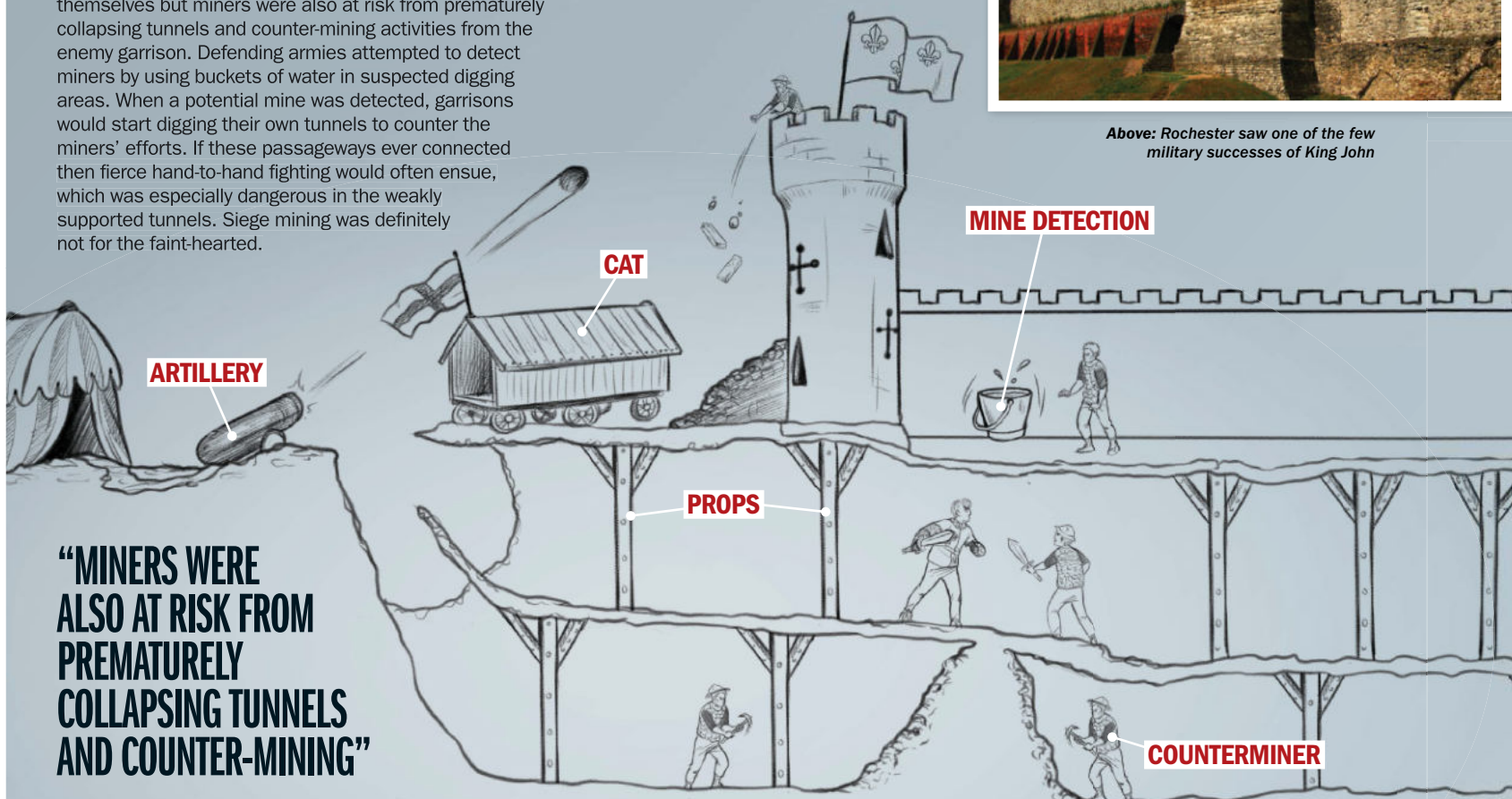
John committed himself totally to retaking the castle and set up his command post on Boley Hill. When his siege engines failed to make an impact on the strong walls, he ordered mining tools to be delivered. On 25 November 1215, he sent an urgent writ to his justiciar to, "Send us with all speed by day and night, forty of

the fattest pigs of the sort least good for eating, to bring fire beneath the tower." This meant a mining operation.

Pig fat was used to fire the mine props that John had positioned beneath the southeast corner of Rochester's keep, which in turn kept up the undermined foundations. The king's mine was successful and a whole section of the keep came down, but despite this achievement the rebels retreated further inside the keep and the siege continued. After they were reduced to a diet of horseflesh and water, the garrison eventually surrendered to John.



Above: Rochester saw one of the few military successes of King John



**"MINERS WERE ALSO AT RISK FROM PREMATURELY COLLAPSING TUNNELS AND COUNTER-MINING"**



## DOVER, 1216

### A PRINCE OF FRANCE USES MINING AS PART OF AN ATTEMPTED INVASION OF ENGLAND

The Siege of Dover Castle was part of a military campaign by Prince Louis of France to assert control over England. King John had alienated many of his nobles and some of them invited Prince Louis, the son of the King of France, to invade England and rid the country of John's tyranny. Louis tried to take the strategically vital fortress at Dover to secure the conquest of Kent.

The siege began in July 1216. He used mangonels and siege towers to try and take the castle but then resorted to mining. A Cat was used to protect the miners and Dover's timber barbican was undermined, enabling Louis' men to successfully storm the barbican.

Louis now tried to press his attack and sent miners to dig beneath the main castle gate. A chronicler recorded, "They mined, so that one of the towers fell, of which there were two."

Large numbers of Louis' men managed to enter the castle through this breach but the defenders, who successfully blocked the gap in the defences with timbers, repulsed them. After this failure Louis was forced to strike a truce and he eventually had to abandon the siege and ultimately left England. Dover showed that the potential of siege mining was limited and in this particular case influenced the failure of a determined invasion of England by a foreign power.



The future Louis VIII of France fought a forgotten war for the English crown against John I and Henry III

## MELUN, 1420

### HENRY V FIGHTS A DUEL... UNDERGROUND

After the Battle of Agincourt, Henry V consolidated his success by waging meticulous campaigns to conquer France, fortress by fortress. By 1420, he was besieging the castle of Melun, 40 miles southeast of Paris, with 20,000 men. Arnaud Guillaume de Barbazan commanded the castle's garrison of 700 and put up a spirited defence by blockading the breaches in the walls made by Henry's cannon. The Frenchman also vigorously countermined the English operations.

Henry and Barbazan were among the fighters in the tunnels and crossed swords at least once. It is rumoured that the tunnels became so large that they once jousted underground on horseback. When Melun surrendered Henry wanted to execute Barbazan but the chivalric laws of arms prevented him from killing an enemy who had fought an honourable duel. The heralds declared that Barbazan had fought in the mines, "in like strength as if he had fought with the king body to body within the lists." Henry was forced to spare Barbazan but imprisoned him in an iron cage instead.

Right: Henry fought a subterranean duel against Arnaud de Barbazan



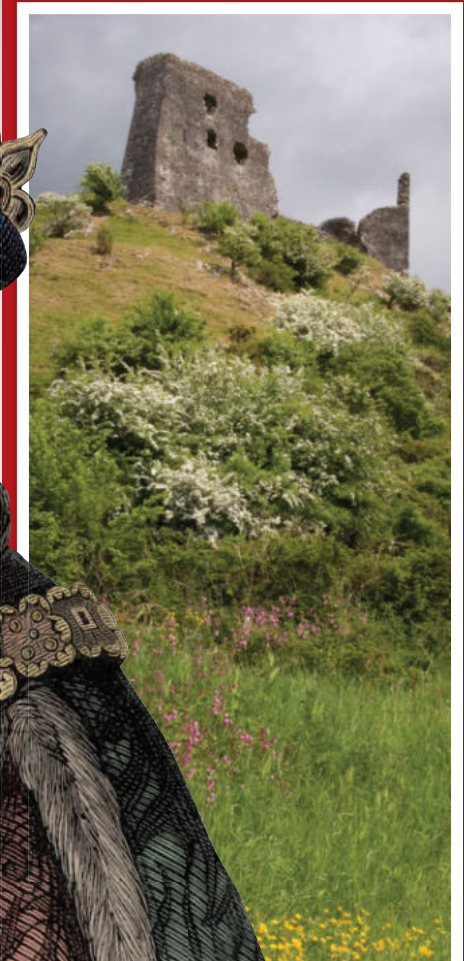
## DRYSLWYN, 1287

### AN ENGLISH MINING OPERATION GOES DISASTROUSLY WRONG IN WALES

Edward I of England conquered Wales between 1277-83 and systematically built a ring of castles in the country to subdue his newly acquired Welsh subjects. However, popular resistance remained strong and, in 1287, a prominent nobleman called Rhys ap Maredudd led a revolt in South Wales. One of his strongholds was Dryslwyn Castle, which was subsequently besieged by 11,000 men led by Edmund of Almain, Earl of Cornwall.

It is recorded that the English attempted to undermine the castle walls, in particular the southeast corner, under the chapel walls. In theory this area by the chapel was the most vulnerable and undefended part of the castle. The English managed to collapse the nearby tower, which was quite the achievement considering it stood on the top of a very long, steep slope. Unfortunately, their success was marred when the tunnel collapsed on top of some of the men, including prominent nobles who were inspecting the mining work. Some of the casualties who were crushed were the Earl of Stafford, Sir William de Monte Caniso and Sir John de Bonvillers. Dryslwyn fell soon afterwards but the accident demonstrated the dire perils of undermining.

Below: Prominent English noblemen were killed while mining underneath Dryslwyn Castle





# CONSTANTINOPLE 1204

In the pursuit of plunder and glory, the Venetians and Latin crusaders launch an assault on the wealthy imperial capital of the Byzantines

In 1203, the main target of the Fourth Crusade changed when the ambitious Alexios IV Angelos convinced the campaign leaders to help him win the Byzantine throne instead of pursuing war in the Holy Land. The prospect of capturing Constantinople, one of the wealthiest cities in the world, was too great to pass up, so the crusaders, and the Venetian fleet that transported them, successfully assaulted the city in July. However, when Alexios V Doukas seized power, had Alexios IV murdered and rallied the Byzantines to resist the foreign invaders in February 1204, the crusaders prepared for another attack on the imperial capital.

**“THOSE LEFT BEHIND SURRENDERED TO THE CRUSADERS BUT THE INVADERS SHOWED NO MERCY TO THE CONQUERED”**

## 1. PREPARATION FOR BATTLE

During the evening of 8 April, the Venetians and Latin crusaders loaded their transport vessels with horses and then embarked onto the galleys with the intention of attacking at dawn the next day.

## 2. FIRST FAILED ASSAULT

On 9 April, Emperor Alexios V commanded the defenders from the top of the hill of Pantepotes monastery where he could see over the fortifications. The Byzantines courageously fought off the attackers with a vicious barrage of stones, missiles and incendiary weapons.

## 3. CRUSADERS REGROUP

Greatly discouraged by their failed attack, the crusaders desperately needed a boost in morale. The clergy in the army gave sermons to spiritually refortify the troops and convince them of the righteousness of their cause. Overall, the churchmen succeeded.

## 4. FLYING BRIDGES OF THE GALLEYS

From the 10-11 April, the ships in the fleet were also reinforced and improved. Several galleys were attached together in pairs so that the flying bridges on top of the ships could more easily hug the towers along the Byzantine fortifications.

## 5. THE SECOND ATTACK

On 12 April, the crusader forces attacked the walls of Constantinople once more, however, a stalemate ensued. The Byzantine projectiles could not break through the timber and vine net protection on the Venetian ships, nor could the crusaders climb over the wooden structures added to the walls.

## 6. A FAVOURABLE WIND

In the afternoon, the situation changed dramatically when a strong wind pushed two bound ships closer to the walls than any had reached before. Not long after, the crusaders managed to seize a tower, followed closely by the capture of a second one.

## 7. A WEAKNESS IN THE WALLS

Meanwhile, ten knights and 60 soldiers moved to a small postern gate on the walls. Using picks, bars, axes and swords, the invaders broke through the bricked-up gate while others used shields to protect them from the missiles raining down upon them.

## 8. THE EMPEROR COUNTERATTACKS

Once open, the crusaders crawled through the hole and regrouped on the other side. When Emperor Alexios V saw the invaders inside the city, he tried to lead an attack but his inexperienced militia troops were too frightened to support him.

## 9. CRUSADERS FLOOD THROUGH THE GATES

Facing little resistance, the crusaders inside Constantinople quickly broke open other gates to let the rest of their army enter the city. The capital was far too large to take immediately so the invasion forces gathered on open ground to completely crush any opposition left.

## 10. FLIGHT OF THE BYZANTINE NOBILITY

The battle never happened though; for the Byzantine emperor and the aristocracy escaped with whatever possessions they could carry. Those left behind surrendered to the crusaders but the invaders showed no mercy to the conquered.

## THE SEAWARD ASSAULT OF CONSTANTINOPLE

**IN 1203, THE VENETIANS WERE MORE SUCCESSFUL ATTACKING CONSTANTINOPLE BY SEA, THEREFORE, THE ENTIRE CRUSADER ARMY FOCUSED ON THE SEAWARD FORTIFICATIONS IN THE MAJOR ASSAULTS OF 1204**

Emperor Alexios V expected the crusaders to attack the walls on the Golden Horn, so he ordered his men to raise the fortifications by constructing enormous wooden towers on top of the battlements that were possibly as tall as six or seven storeys. Furthermore, the structures were covered with hides soaked in vinegar to negate the effects of the crusaders' incendiary weapons. Similarly, the Venetians utilised soaked hides for their ships, along with thick vine nets to block stone projectiles.

During the battles on 9 and 12 April, the reinforced defences of both sides were so effective that the catapults, mangonels and petraries the armies fired at each other did not cause significant damage to the fortifications or the armoured ships. Even the variations of Greek fire used by both sides failed to ignite the saturated hide coverings. On the other hand, the crusaders had considerable success with flying bridges in the successful attack on 12 April, attaching them to the tops of the masts of the Venetian vessels. These pivotal, ramp-like structures on the largest vessels allowed the crusaders to climb over the huge wooden reinforcements on top of the walls and take two of the defensive towers.

*This anachronistic painting of the siege, produced in the 1460s, shows the extended fortifications on the city towers*







“THE CRUSADERS HAD CONSIDERABLE SUCCESS WITH FLYING BRIDGES IN THE SUCCESSFUL ATTACK ON 12 APRIL, ATTACHING THEM TO THE TOPS OF THE MASTS OF THE VENETIAN VESSELS”



# THE LIGHT BRIGADE'S RIDE



*The charge is often used as an example of the incompetence of the British military command in the war*



# TO DEATH OR GLORY

WORDS NICK SOLDINGER





**J**ust after 11am on 25 October 1854, at what was to become known as the Battle of Balaclava, Orderly Bugler William 'Billy' Brittain put his bugle to his lips. Resplendent in the blue uniform of the 17th Lancers, complete with its distinctive flat-topped czapka cap bearing the regimental badge – a death's head with the motto 'Or Glory' – he sounded the order to advance. The badge's sentiment was to prove hauntingly prophetic as the chirpy notes he now sounded from his bugle were about to send over 600 cavalymen from Britain's elite Light Brigade galloping to their doom.

It wasn't that Billy Brittain was to blame for one of the greatest military blunders of all time. After all, like the rest of the men who took part in what became the fabled Charge of the Light Brigade, he was merely following orders. "Trumpeter, walk... march!" His commanding officer, Lord Cardigan, had barked at him moments before. But he, too, was just obeying orders. So who was responsible for the disastrous charge? And what were men like Billy doing on a remote Russian plain risking their lives for the British Imperial cause in the first place?

Step forward Russia's ambitious monarch Nicholas I. By the mid-19th century, Turkey's Ottoman Empire was in decline and the Czar saw an opportunity to expand his borders westward. Capture Constantinople, he figured, and Russia's warships would have access to the Mediterranean, allowing his country unprecedented influence over foreign trade routes. It was clearly something the men who ran Victoria's wave-ruling empire were never going to allow. The Czar, though, was not as easily deterred.

In July 1853, a religious row between France, Turkey and Russia over the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem escalated into a full-blown war when Czar Nicholas used the diplomatic dispute as an excuse to invade Ottoman lands. Britain watched the war with interest. When Turkey started to lose, Victoria's government issued an ultimatum for Russia to withdraw. When the bullish Czar ignored it, Britain's Imperial propaganda machine went into overdrive. With its press fanning the flames, war fever gripped the nation.

By spring the following year, flag-waving crowds cheered Britain's hastily assembled 28,000-strong expeditionary force onto a flotilla of gunships and waved them off over the horizon. The Russian Bear, many a British citizen believed, with all their pumped-up heart, was going to get the thrashing it deserved.

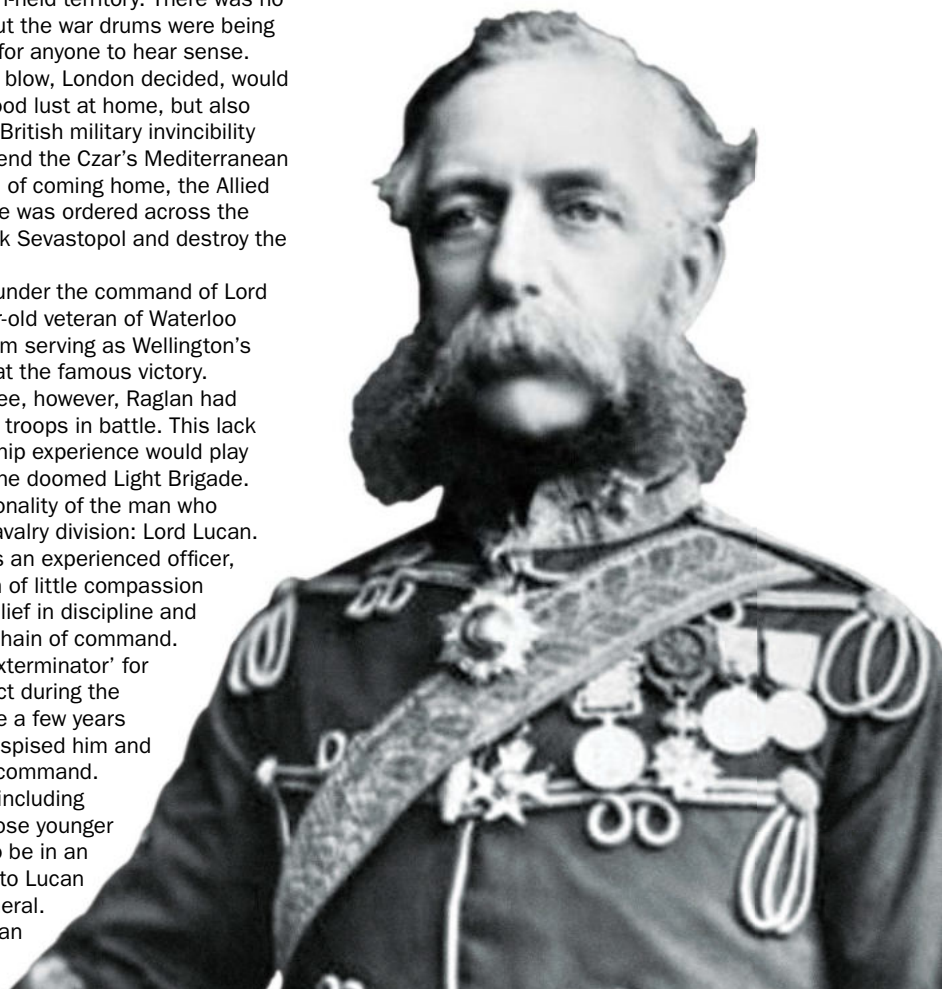
By August, British troops were in Varna, in Turkish-held Bulgaria, where they were met by 30,000 troops from France, who had joined Britain's crusade. Here they were also met by news that the Czar – alarmed by reports that Austrian troops were massing on Russia's western border – had actually withdrawn his troops from Turkish-held territory. There was no need for conflict but the war drums were being banged too loudly for anyone to hear sense.

A swift, decisive blow, London decided, would not only satisfy blood lust at home, but also add to the aura of British military invincibility abroad as well as end the Czar's Mediterranean ambitions. Instead of coming home, the Allied Expeditionary Force was ordered across the Black Sea to attack Sevastopol and destroy the Russian fleet.

The Allies were under the command of Lord Raglan – a 66-year-old veteran of Waterloo who had lost an arm serving as Wellington's military secretary at the famous victory. Despite his pedigree, however, Raglan had never commanded troops in battle. This lack of combat leadership experience would play its part in fate of the doomed Light Brigade. As would the personality of the man who commanded his cavalry division: Lord Lucan.

While Lucan was an experienced officer, he was also a man of little compassion and unwavering belief in discipline and obedience to the chain of command. Nicknamed 'The Exterminator' for his sadistic conduct during the Irish Potato Famine a few years earlier, his men despised him and his brutal style of command. Lucan's officers – including Lord Cardigan, whose younger sister happened to be in an unhappy marriage to Lucan – loathed their general. As a result, Cardigan was barely able

**"NICKNAMED 'THE EXTERMINATOR' FOR HIS SADISTIC CONDUCT DURING THE IRISH POTATO FAMINE A FEW YEARS EARLIER, HIS MEN DESPISED HIM AND HIS BRUTAL STYLE OF COMMAND"**



**Above: Lord Cardigan who led the Light Brigade's infamous charge during the Battle of Balaclava came home to a hero's welcome**

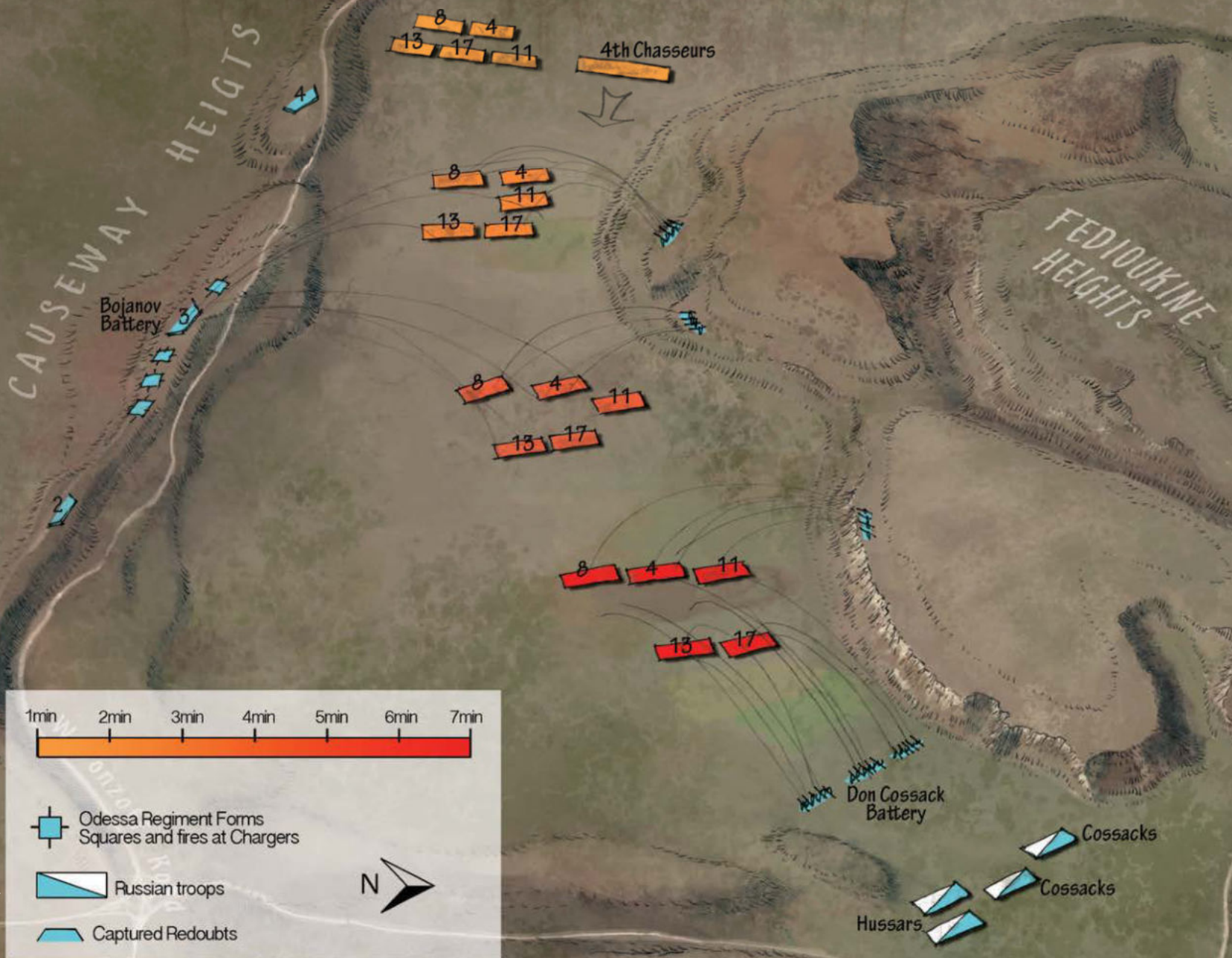
**The 93rd Highlanders were lionised by the British Press for their bravery and actions at Balaclava**





# THE CHARGE AS IT HAPPENED

HOW THIRTY MINUTES OF HISTORY HELPED SHAPE THE MYTHOLOGY OF THE MIGHTY BRITISH EMPIRE



**11am**

## LORD CARDIGAN GIVES THE ORDER TO ADVANCE

Despite realising that he is leading his men into certain peril, the Light Brigade's commander tells his bugler to sound the advance. "Here goes the last of the Brudenells," he is heard to murmur to himself shortly before. Brudenell was his family name and he was the last male in its bloodline.

**11.02am**

## CAPTAIN NOLAN IS THE FIRST CASUALTY

Minutes into the charge the man who'd delivered the fateful order, Captain Lewis Nolan, is killed instantly by a shrapnel wound to his chest. It's thought that, having finally realised his misconstrued message would have tragic results, he raced to the front of the Brigade to try to redirect the charge.

**11.08am**

## CARDIGAN'S MEN REACH THE RUSSIAN LINES

After a full six minutes of riding through an intense artillery barrage, around 150 men of the Light Brigade finally reach the Russian line and, after intense hand-to-hand combat with the infantry and artillery men there, break through it. Incredibly, their leader, Lord Cardigan, survives the entire charge unscathed.

**11.09am**

## THE BRIGADE ENCOUNTERS MENSHIKOV'S CAVALRY

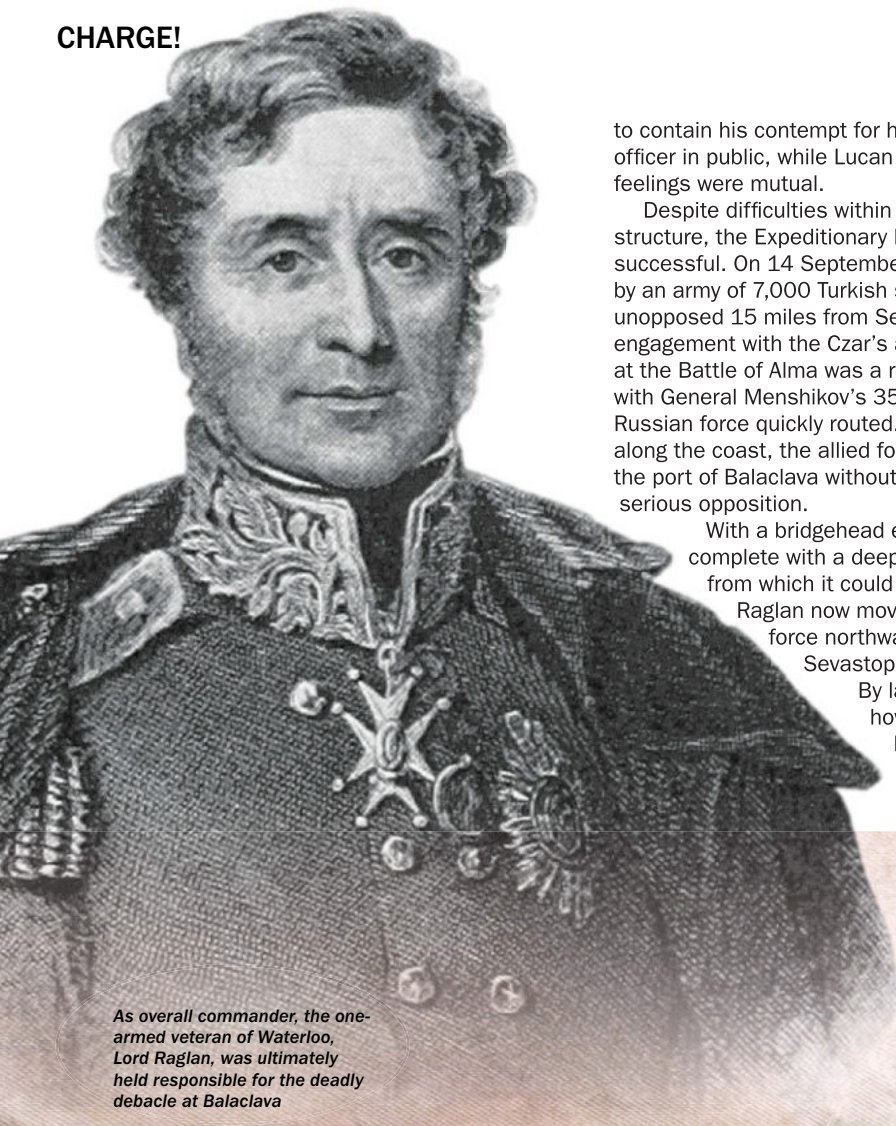
Behind the Russian guns, however, are around 2,000 Russian cavalymen. Having rushed through the gun positions, the Light Brigade now ploughs into their massed ranks. They are hopelessly outnumbered and after a brief but ferocious skirmish, those still alive or able to begin to withdraw.

**11.30am**

## THE LAST SURVIVORS ARRIVE BACK AT BRITISH LINES

Half an hour after it started, the survivors hobble back to the British line at the western end of the valley. The casualties are thought to be approximately 110 killed, 160 wounded with the loss of around 375 horses. Although not wiped out the Light Brigade is effectively rendered inoperable for the rest of the campaign.





As overall commander, the one-armed veteran of Waterloo, Lord Raglan, was ultimately held responsible for the deadly debacle at Balaclava

to contain his contempt for his commanding officer in public, while Lucan made it clear the feelings were mutual.

Despite difficulties within its command structure, the Expeditionary Force was initially successful. On 14 September, by now joined by an army of 7,000 Turkish soldiers, it landed unopposed 15 miles from Sevastopol. Its first engagement with the Czar's army six days later at the Battle of Alma was a rousing success, with General Menshikov's 35,000-strong Russian force quickly routed. Continuing further along the coast, the allied force then seized the port of Balaclava without encountering any serious opposition.

With a bridgehead established, complete with a deep-water harbour from which it could be resupplied, Raglan now moved the bulk of his force northwards to besiege Sevastopol.

By late October, however, Raglan began to receive reports that Menshikov's

routed army had regrouped and was now preparing to attack on Balaclava. With Raglan's forces stretched right across the Crimean peninsular, the defence of the port was left to the highly able Sir Colin Campbell and a few thousand men. Campbell had established a string of redoubts along the Causeway Heights to the north of Balaclava. These defensive positions were intended to keep watch over the position and the valley approaches that fed into it and were mostly manned by Turkish artillery. To the east of the port he placed 1,200 Royal Marines with 26 guns, while entrance to the gorge was protected by the 93rd Highlanders, and W Battery of the Royal Artillery. Meanwhile, Lucan's cavalry division – made up of both the Light and Heavy Brigades – was around a mile to the north of Balaclava. With the nearest reinforcements at least a two-hour march away to the north, the redoubts on the Causeway Heights were tactically vital for the defence of Balaclava, and Campbell knew it. Unfortunately, so did the Russians.

On 25 October, General Menshikov unleashed a force of 25 battalions and 78 guns to seize the redoubts. Attacking at dawn,

**“AGAINST ALL THE ODDS, THE BRITISH HAD WON A SECOND UNLIKELY VICTORY IN THE EVOLVING BATTLE OF BALACLAVA – BUT THEIR LUCK WAS ABOUT TO RUN OUT”**







On his return home Lord Cardigan gave highly exaggerated accounts of his part in the battle

the Russians soon overran the positions there and by 8am controlled all six strongholds along the causeway heights. After surveying the battlefield from the Sapouné Heights to the north, Raglan sent orders for reinforcements to urgently march south to support the defence of Balaclava. He also ordered Lucan to withdraw his cavalry to protect them from artillery fire, leaving just the 550 men of the 93rd Highlanders, and a single artillery battery between the Russians and their allies' vital supply link at Balaclava. Within minutes, around 400 Russian Hussars were galloping straight towards the Highlanders. Abandoning the square formation tactic, typically employed by the British army at that time, Campbell organised his troops into two ranks, the soon-to-be famous Thin Red Line. The Russians charged the Highlanders, but incredibly the line stood and the Hussars were sent galloping back in full retreat, harassed by artillery as they ran.

Raglan was as surprised as anyone by the unlikely rout. Expecting the Highlanders to be overrun, he'd ordered Lucan to dispatch eight squadrons from his Heavy Brigade in support. These now ran into the remainder of the Russian cavalry – some 2,000 men. Despite being outnumbered five to one, the Heavy Brigade charged the Russians and miraculously routed them. Against all the odds, the British had won a second unlikely victory in the evolving Battle of Balaclava – but their luck was about to run out.

What remained of the Russian cavalry withdrew to the far end of the North Valley – a mile or so to the east – where they joined an eight-gun-strong field battery. In close proximity, on both sides of the valley, were another 22 Russian guns – meaning more than 30 artillery pieces zeroed in on the valley's narrow corridor. It was death trap, which Raglan could quite clearly see from his position atop the Sapouné Heights to the north. Also within his sights were Russian troops wheeling captured Turkish artillery pieces down from the redoubts and back to their own lines.

It was now 10am and Raglan, believing the redoubts were being abandoned, sent an order to Lucan to quickly explore the possibility of retaking them. His ambiguous order read, "Cavalry to advance and take advantage of any opportunity to recover the Heights. They will be supported by infantry, which have been ordered. Advance on two fronts." The infantry Raglan spoke of were the reinforcements he'd earlier called for who were still marching south and nowhere to be seen. Lucan, assuming he had to wait for them, stayed put.

Half an hour passed before an irate Raglan sent yet another misleading order. This one

## BLUNDERED ORDERS

HOW MISCOMMUNICATION, HOT HEADEDNESS AND PERSONAL GRIEVANCE ALL PLAYED A PART IN THE DISASTER

### LORD RAGLAN

#### ORDER:

In a hastily scribbled note Lord Raglan writes, "cavalry to advance rapidly to the front, follow the enemy, and try to prevent the enemy carrying away the guns."



### CAPTAIN NOLAN

#### ORDER:

"Tell Lord Lucan the cavalry is to attack immediately!" Lord Raglan shouts after an overexcited Nolan, before pointing vaguely at the Russian position at the far end of the north valley.



### LORD LUCAN

#### ORDER:

Nolan passes on the order to Lord Lucan, who instructs Lord Cardigan to lead the attack. "What choice have we?" he shrugs when the latter points out the suicidal order.



read, "Lord Raglan wishes the cavalry to advance rapidly to the front, follow the enemy, and try to prevent the enemy carrying away the guns. Troop of horse artillery may accompany. French cavalry is on your left. Immediate." It was to prove a fatal choice of words, as the man sent to deliver the message – the notoriously hot-headed Captain Nolan – would also play his role in the unfolding tragedy. "Tell Lord Lucan the cavalry is to attack immediately!" Raglan shouted after Nolan as he galloped away.

Upon Nolan's delivery of Raglan's missive a confused Lucan looked about the battlefield and asked, "Attack, sir? Attack what? What guns sir?" Because of the corrugated terrain he could see the Russian position at the end of the valley, but not the Russian troops making off with captured artillery pieces from the redoubts. A highly excited Nolan then reportedly made a sweeping gesture towards the far end of the valley and shouted. "There my Lord

**"RUSSIAN GUNS ON THREE SIDES NOW RAINED FIRE DOWN ON THE ADVANCING BRITISH CAVALRY, WHILE THE ALLIED COMMANDERS ON THE HEIGHTS STARED ON IN DISBELIEF AT THE SPECTACULAR BUT SUICIDAL DRAMA BEING PLAYED OUT IN FRONT OF THEM"**



The Charge of the Light Brigade still continues to inspire film, literature and music across the world



## CHARGE!

War artist William Simpson's official painting of the Charge was vetted by Cardigan to show him clearly leading the ranks





**“THESE DANDYISH VICTORIAN WARRIORS,  
IDEOLOGICALLY HARD-WIRED FOR DEATH OR  
GLORY, RODE INTO BRITISH IMPERIAL MYTHOLOGY,  
PUMPED ON PATRIOTISM AND ADRENALINE”**





is your enemy. There are your guns!" before reiterating Raglan's wishes that the attack should take place immediately.

So Lucan complied, ordering his hated brother-in-law's Light Brigade take point. When Lord Cardigan, not unreasonably, questioned the sanity of the order, Lucan merely replied that those were the orders he'd been given, adding: "What choice have we?" The Light Brigade's fate was sealed. Before giving Billy Brittain the order to sound the advance, Cardigan was heard to murmur, "Well, here goes the last of the Brudenells," a reference to his family name and the fact he clearly didn't expect to survive the morning.

The three lines of the Light Brigade began to ride slowly down into the valley's death trap. Behind them followed the Heavy Brigade on their larger horses.

William Howard Russell, a reporter with the *The Times* and the world's first modern war correspondent, watched on with a mix of wonder and horror: "They swept proudly past," he wrote, "glittering in the morning sun in all the pride and splendour of war. We could hardly believe the evidence of our senses! Surely that handful of men were not going to charge an army in position? Alas! It was but too true – their desperate valour knew no bounds, and far indeed was it removed from its so-called better part – discretion."

*The actions at Balaclava greatly increased the reputation of British cavalry across Europe and the world. The same cannot be said for the British commanders*



As the Light Brigade's trot broke into an all-out gallop, an agitated Captain Nolan suddenly broke ranks and raced to the front of the advance shouting at Lord Cardigan. Many have since speculated that, having finally realised the direction the charge was taking was wrong, he was trying to avert catastrophe.

Whatever he was shouting, however, was lost in the din of horses' hooves and the opening salvos from the Russian guns, and whatever his intentions were followed him to the grave. Moments later a shell burst directly above him and Nolan fell, the first of the Light Brigade's casualties that morning.

Russian guns on three sides now rained fire down on the advancing British cavalry, while the allied commanders on the heights stared on in disbelief at the spectacular, but suicidal, drama being played out in front of them. One astonished French commander, General Bosquet, was heard to comment, "C'est magnifique, mais ce n'est pas la guerre: c'est de la folie." It's magnificent, but it is not war: it is madness.

Indeed, madness it was. A full-frontal cavalry assault against a fixed artillery position by what was a light, fast-moving reconnaissance unit ran contrary to every military practice. Yet these dandyish Victorian warriors, ideologically hard-

wired for death or glory, rode into British Imperial mythology, pumped on patriotism and adrenaline. Raglan's aide-de-camp, Lieutenant-Colonel Calthorpe, described the unfolding disaster in a letter shortly afterwards. "The pace of our cavalry increased every moment, until they went thundering along the valley, making the ground tremble beneath them. The awful slaughter that was going on, from the fire the enemy poured into them, apparently did not check their career. On they went, headlong towards their death, disregarding aught but the object of their attack."

Such was the speed of the Light Brigade's advance, that a significant gap opened up between it and the chasing Heavy Brigade. Armed with swords designed to hack and stab at close-quarter combat – rather than the slashing sabres and piercing lances the Light Brigade carried – the Heavies with their bigger horses were the tanks of the Victorian battlefield. Trained and equipped to smash into enemy positions and break them, they might have tipped the balance in the fighting that was to follow. But as the Light Brigade disappeared into the distance amid dust and cannon smoke, Lucan pulled them up and allowed his despised brother-in-law's men continue into the jaws of death alone. "They have sacrificed the Light Brigade, they shall not have the Heavy if I can help it!" he is reported to have said.

By now the Light Brigade, despite horrific casualties, was nearing the Russian line. Miraculously, still riding amongst its ranks was

*Left: Lord Lucan – great, great grandfather of his notorious 20th-century namesake – sent his brother-in-law Cardigan ahead of him into the valley of death*

**"THEN WE WERE ON IT, HALF A DOZEN OF US LEAPT IN AMONG THE GUNS AT ONCE AND I, WITH ONE BLOW OF MY AXE, BRAINED A RUSSIAN GUNNER..."**



lancer Billy Brittain, whose bugle had started the whole fiasco, as well as men like Hussar Albert Mitchell, who would afterwards recall the intensity of the charge. "As we drew near, the guns in our front supplied us liberally with grape and canister which brought down men and horses in heaps. Up to this time I was going on alright but missed my left-hand man from my side and thinking it might soon be my turn offered up a small prayer, 'Oh Lord protect me and watch over my poor mother.'"

With the air thick with grapeshot, smoke and dying screams the Light Brigade was just 100 yards from Russian guns when a final volley of grapeshot smashed into its ranks. Only 150 men on horseback had reached the Russian line and now they began to inflict a violent but brief revenge. One man who made it the length of the charge without injury was the 17th Lancers regimental butcher John Fahey. The night before he'd been arrested for being drunk and that morning had appeared late on parade still dressed in his butcher's apron, which he now wore as his horse galloped towards destiny. He was armed not with a lance but a

## "OF THE 673 MEN, ALTHOUGH THE NUMBER IS DISPUTED, WHO HAD CHARGED THAT MORNING, JUST 195 WERE LEFT MOUNTED AFTER THE BATTLE. THE RECRIMINATIONS BEGAN ALMOST IMMEDIATELY"

meat cleaver from his field kitchen. "Nearer and nearer we came to the dreadful battery," he revealed some time later, "which kept vomiting death on us like a volcano 'til I seemed to feel on my cheek the hot air from the cannon's mouth. Then we were on it, half a dozen of us leapt in among the guns at once and I, with one blow of my axe, brained a Russian gunner..."

But the fray would not last long. Having smashed through the Russian guns at the far end of the valley, they were confronted by the massed ranks of Russian cavalry. The Light Brigade charged once more, but against such an overwhelming number, they were soon forced to retreat.

Among the British observers watching the entire debacle was Fanny Duberly, the wife of a Light Brigade officer, who later wrote a

controversial book detailing what she had witnessed. As the cloud of gun smoke and disturbed Crimean dust began to settle, she described a pathetic scene: "presently come a few horsemen, straggling, galloping back. What can those skirmishers be doing? Good God! It's the Light Brigade!"

Of the 673 men (although the number is disputed) who had charged that morning, only 195 were left mounted after the battle. The recriminations began almost immediately. Cardigan, who'd miraculously survived the charge, was initially reprimanded by a furious Raglan until Cardigan pointed out that he was, after all, just following orders. "My Lord," Cardigan reportedly said, "I hope you will not blame me, for I received the order to attack from my superior officer in front of the troops."

# BALACLAVA'S CAVALRY CARNAGE

THE LIGHT BRIGADE'S CHARGE IS THE MOST FAMOUS, YET LEAST SUCCESSFUL OF THREE MADE DURING THE BATTLE

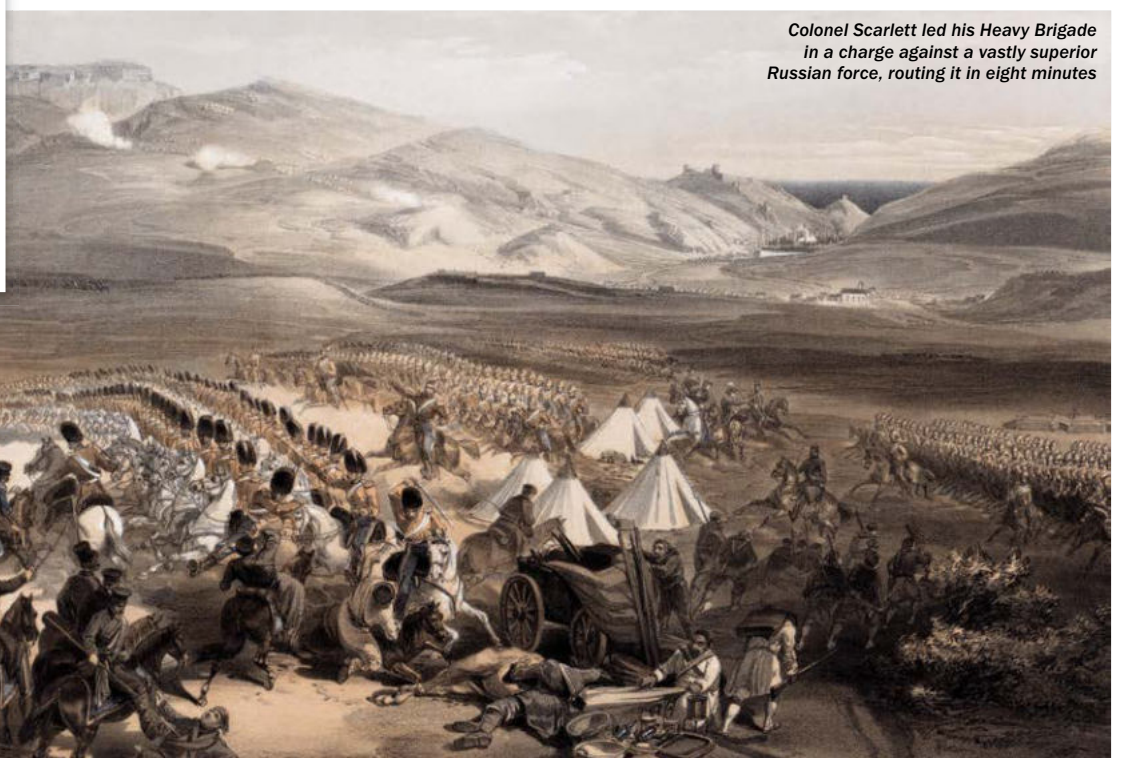
Of the three charges made by the allies during the Battle of Balaklava, the one undertaken by the Light Brigade was by far the least successful. Two hours previous, eight squadrons of the British Heavy Brigade, under the command of the highly capable Colonel James Scarlett, had run into the main force of the Russian cavalry in the chaos of battle. Despite being significantly outnumbered – Scarlett's force is thought to have consisted of between 300-400 men while the Russian force was more than 2,000 strong – the Heavies ploughed into the Russian flank. Eight minutes of hacking and slashing followed at close quarters

until the Russians turned and fled back to the safety of their own lines. One French general said after witnessing the action, "It was truly magnificent and to me who could see the whole valley filled with Russian cavalry, the victory of the Heavy Brigade was the most glorious thing I ever saw!"

Before the day was out, the French cavalry would also prove their worth, however. During the Light Brigade survivors' shambolic retreat back down the North Valley, they were again torn into by the Russian guns on the hillsides. It is highly likely they would have all been wiped out had it not been for the French cavalry regiment, the Chasseurs d'Afrique. On seeing an opportunity to help the Light Brigade, they stormed the hillsides on the Brigade's left flank attacking the Russian positions there, helping to bring an end to the suffering in the valley below.



*Left: Soldiers of the French Regiment the Chasseurs d'Afrique relax after having attacked Russian guns pounding the Light Brigade's left flank*



*Colonel Scarlett led his Heavy Brigade in a charge against a vastly superior Russian force, routing it in eight minutes*

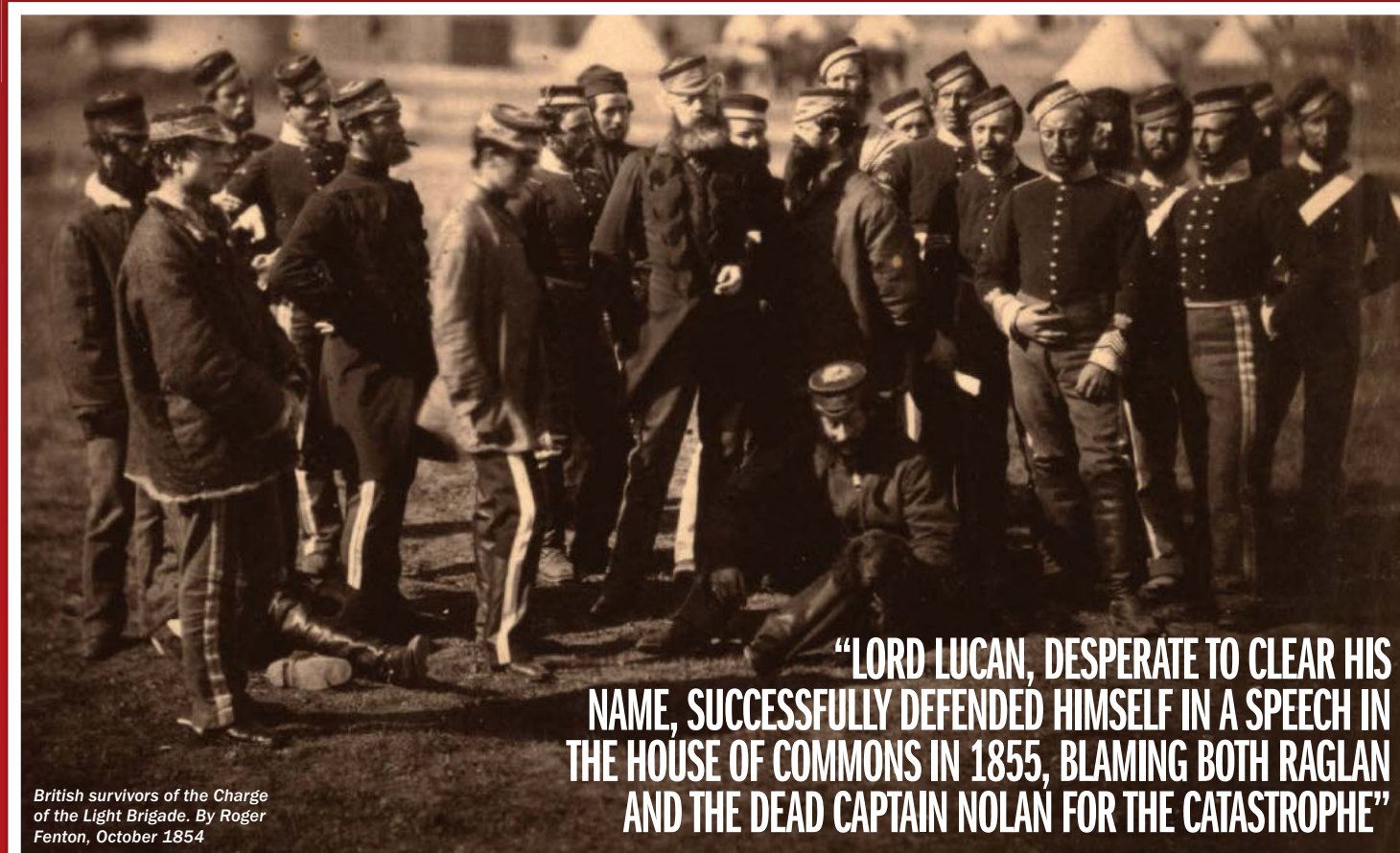


# SURVIVORS OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE

ALMOST AS SOON AS THE CANNON SMOKE LIFTED, LEGENDS AND LIES BEGAN TO SPIN

The Light Brigade suffered 40 per cent casualty rates and as a result saw limited action throughout the rest of the Crimean campaign, which ended in February 1856. Almost immediately public spats broke out amongst the aristocratic antagonists who had played key roles in the debacle. Lord Lucan, desperate to clear his name, successfully defended himself in a speech in the House of Commons in 1855, blaming both Raglan and the dead Captain Nolan for the catastrophe. His tactic appears to have worked as he was subsequently promoted. Cardigan, who also returned to Britain in 1855, was given a hero's welcome. Although, he later found his apparently daring role in the battle – something which he'd made a good deal of – come under scrutiny by the Press.

As for the ordinary men who'd fought and survived that day, however, they, for the most part, have shuffled off into the shadows of history. Not that there wasn't enthusiastic public support for them at the time. In fact, a Light Brigade Relief Fund – a sort of Victorian Help for Heroes – was quickly set up. This was funded by public donation as well as a number of entrepreneurial enterprises. One example was a recording of Billy Brittain's bugle order as remembered by Light Brigade veteran Martin Lanfried in 1890. The apparently opportunistic Lanfried billed himself as the man who'd sounded the fateful order to charge that day, and for years seems to have enjoyed a measure of celebrity as a result.



British survivors of the Charge of the Light Brigade. By Roger Fenton, October 1854

**“LORD LUCAN, DESPERATE TO CLEAR HIS NAME, SUCCESSFULLY DEFENDED HIMSELF IN A SPEECH IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS IN 1855, BLAMING BOTH RAGLAN AND THE DEAD CAPTAIN NOLAN FOR THE CATASTROPHE”**

When Raglan's anger cooled, he had to admit that Cardigan wasn't to blame. He'd "acted throughout," he later wrote in a letter, typical of many comments on Cardigan's part in the disaster, "with the greatest steadiness and gallantry." With Lucan, however, Raglan wasn't so forgiving. Soon after his conversation with Cardigan, who'd not surprisingly blamed his brother-in-law, Raglan told Lucan bluntly, "You have lost the Light Brigade."

It was an accusation Lucan vehemently denied and continued to do so for the rest of his life. The dead Nolan – who, of course, couldn't defend himself – was also held up as culpable by both Lucan and Raglan as they squirmed to shift blame from themselves.

Official reports of the battle sent home focussed on the valour of the Light Brigade, while the evident incompetence was swiftly glossed over.

Poets, painters and the Press all rushed to turn disaster into glory. Within weeks, Queen Victoria's Poet Laureate, Alfred Lord

Tennyson, had immortalised the action in his most famous verse *The Charge Of The Light Brigade* which spoke, with rousing patriotism, of the "noble 600" who'd ridden "into the Valley of Death", signing it off with a call for the world to honour their glorious sacrifice. While Tennyson was scribbling his poem back in Britain, painter William Simpson arrived in the Crimea as official war artist for the British government. Having not witnessed the events he was reliant upon those who had for a steer on how it should be officially recorded. Lord Cardigan was the most forthcoming and, after three attempts, finally signed off on Simpson's interpretation of what had happened. "The truth was," Simpson admitted later, "that in the last sketch I had taken greater care than in the first two to make his lordship conspicuous in the front of the brigade."

Simpson's vetted watercolours received the same privileged treatment as Raglan's own despatches from the front and were sent home on the first available ship. Although there

was no censorship per se, journalist William Howard Russell's reports and soldiers' letters were delayed in Balaclava to ensure the official version of events got home first. Imperial Britain's PR machine was clearly working hard to turn a military calamity into a story of mythic stoicism – something it largely succeeded in doing. The legendary Charge of the Light Brigade is still remembered by many, not for the ineptitude that caused it, but rather by the courageous sacrifice of the men who died undertaking a senseless action in a war that could have been avoided in the first place.

But what of Billy Brittain, whose bugle call had sparked the mythic Charge in the first place? Despite the patriotic-sounding name, Brittain was actually from Ireland – a land recently ravaged by famine – and like many of his countrymen he may well have joined the ranks of the British army as a means of staying alive. Badly wounded in the charge, Brittain was taken to a field hospital at Scutari where he died of his wounds on 14 February 1855.

Images: Alamy, Chris Collingwood (www.collingwoodhistorical.com)



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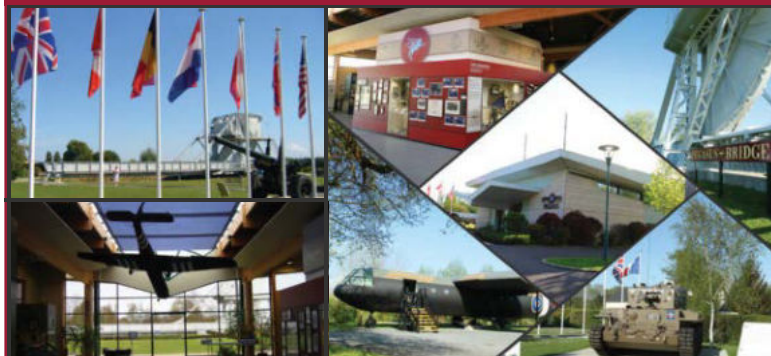
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# VERDUN

1916  
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## PART II

WORDS JONATHAN KRAUSE

As Falkenhayn's brutal strategy becomes a bloody reality, the French Army teeters on the brink of annihilation

**O**n 12 July 1916 the fate of Verdun, France's ancient bastion, was all but secured. After nearly five months of hammering away at French positions, winning success after success and inching ever closer to that citadel on the Meuse River, the German army was within reach of Verdun. There was only one last obstacle: Fort Souville.

This fort rested on the last imposing heights before Verdun. From there the Germans could easily swamp the ruined Fort Saint-Michel – standing modestly atop a hill just 344 metres tall – and be in a position to assault Verdun directly. The artillery preparation began on 10 July at 12pm; the Germans would concentrate 330,000 shells on an area just 25 kilometres square. To this the French would add nearly 200,000 shells in counter-bombardments.

More than 500,000 shells fell within 20 hours. The Germans threw Operation 'Croix Verte' into this din, with the launching of 63,000 artillery shells, filled with deadly phosgene gas, against French artillery positions.

Sergeant Marc Boasson described the gas attack as: 'A gripping spectacle; little by little, we saw the country disappear, the valley become filled with an ashy coloured smoke, clouds grow and climb, things turn sombre in

this poisoned fluid. The odour of gas, slightly soapy, occasionally reached us despite the distance. And at the bottom of the cloud one heard the rumble of explosions, a dull noise like a muffled drum.'

The intensity of the bombardment and counter-bombardment was immense, and losses were heavy on both sides before the attack was even launched. The Bavarian Alpen, an elite formation tasked with assaulting

**"THE GERMANS WOULD CONCENTRATE 330,000 SHELLS ON AN AREA JUST 25 KILOMETRES SQUARE. TO THIS THE FRENCH WOULD ADD NEARLY 200,000 SHELLS IN COUNTER-BOMBARDMENTS. MORE THAN 500,000 SHELLS FELL WITHIN 20 HOURS"**



*The skeletal corpse of a soldier lies unburied on the battlefield*



*French troops take  
shelter in a cramped  
trench for protection*





Souville, suffered heavily. Its 140th Infantry Regiment was hit especially hard; the regiment's 2nd battalion had lost virtually all of its officers. The Bavarian Guard had lost seven of its eight trench mortars, plus 37 dead and 83 wounded before even going over the top. Other units in the regiment refused to advance due to heavy losses.

Those elements of the Alpen Korps that fought on, did so through dense gas, and were met with intense French machine gun and artillery fire. Despite heavy losses they pressed on to within 500 metres of Fort Souville. The French, on their side, launched manic and poorly organised counterattacks to try to stem the tide. General Charles 'the butcher' Mangin sent men from the 114e RI (régiment

### **"SUCH WEAK EFFORTS HAD NO HOPES OF SUCCESS, AND DESPITE THEIR LOSSES GERMAN TROOPS STOOD READY TO ASSAULT FORT SOUVILLE ON THE MORNING OF 12 JULY"**

d'infanterie) to futile night attacks. Confused and disoriented they attacked in the wrong direction, and suffered heavy casualties. Such weak efforts had no hopes of success, and despite their losses, German troops stood ready to assault Fort Souville on the morning of 12 July. The fate of Verdun would be sealed on the glacis of Fort Souville shortly after 9am.

Without officers, hemmed in by intense artillery fire, a small remnant of the 140th IR

(German infantry regiment) found themselves unable to withdraw and rejoin their comrades. Instead, they chose to advance, sending forward a section of just 30 men (Section Bayer of 2nd Company). Alone, they stormed up the glacis of Fort Souville at 9am on 12 July.

The defenders of the fort were hardly in a better position. Commanded by the 65-year-old Lieutenant-Colonel Astruc de Saint-Germain, the garrison had for days been sealed off by a curtain





of fire and steel, hammered by German artillery, and deluged with poison gas. One company of reinforcements under Lieutenant Dupuy had been sent to pass through the German artillery barrage separating the fort from the rest of the French army; only 60 men survived to reach the fort. It was these same men that defended the glacis from the haggard assault of Section Bayer.

These 90 French and German soldiers, worn and weathered, would decide the fate of Verdun. Section Bayer attacked and was met with Dupuy's machine guns; their rapid chatter silenced the German assault. Fort Souville, and so Verdun, was safe. After 12 July the Germans would have no hope of capturing that grand objective.

By now the Battle of the Somme was raging, pulling German attention, men and materiel

*A German soldier takes up a position next to a corpse, thought to be French, near Fort Vaux*

northwards. Yet, the Verdun battle ground on for another five months. It had taken on a life of its own, living on only by some internal logic, which compelled the French to launch a series of costly counterattacks to regain the ground lost since February that same year. The great events of history are so often larger than the men and women who populate and perpetuate them – they seemingly have willpower unto themselves. This article explores the life, nature and impact of this, the longest battle of World War I: Verdun.

## 21-23 February

The battle of Verdun began on 21 February 1916, after many weeks of preparation through harsh winter conditions. To begin, the Germans unleashed a dense artillery bombardment on French positions in the sector. Even though many French soldiers had expected the attack, the sheer weight of fire was overwhelming.

The Germans under Crown Prince Wilhelm, the son of Kaiser Wilhelm, had managed to sneak an additional 160 batteries of heavy and super-heavy guns into the sector without the French noticing. This was roughly half as many heavy guns as the entire French army, 2.6 million strong, had marched to war with just 18 months prior.

The initial German bombardment was awe-inspiring. French aviators couldn't place the enemy batteries in this din; too many were firing too rapidly from all directions. Most of this bombardment was focused on the triangle Brabant-Ornes-Verdun. Against a front of roughly 40 kilometres, the Germans launched 1 million shells, many of them filled with lachrymatory or poison gas. The fire was so thick that French runners couldn't penetrate it, isolating forward French positions and breaking their systems for command and control.

This initial bombardment lasted for nine hours, from 7am to 4pm. Then, the attack went in. French defenders braced themselves for the expected hordes of German forces to come swarming across No Man's Land; the Germans, however, had a different idea.

Instead of launching the sort of 'massed' attack that had become the norm on the Western Front, they surreptitiously sent small packets of men across No Man's Land – in some areas a vast 800 metres wide – to gently probe and prick the French line, testing for any weaknesses. The Germans seemed to be practicing the sort of warfare that officers like Philippe Pétain had been advocating for the French troops: the artillery conquers, the infantry occupies.

**"HE IS SIMULTANEOUSLY THE MAN WHO SAVED VERDUN, AND ALSO THE PRESIDENT OF VICHY FRANCE WHO COLLABORATED WITH THE NAZI REGIME"**

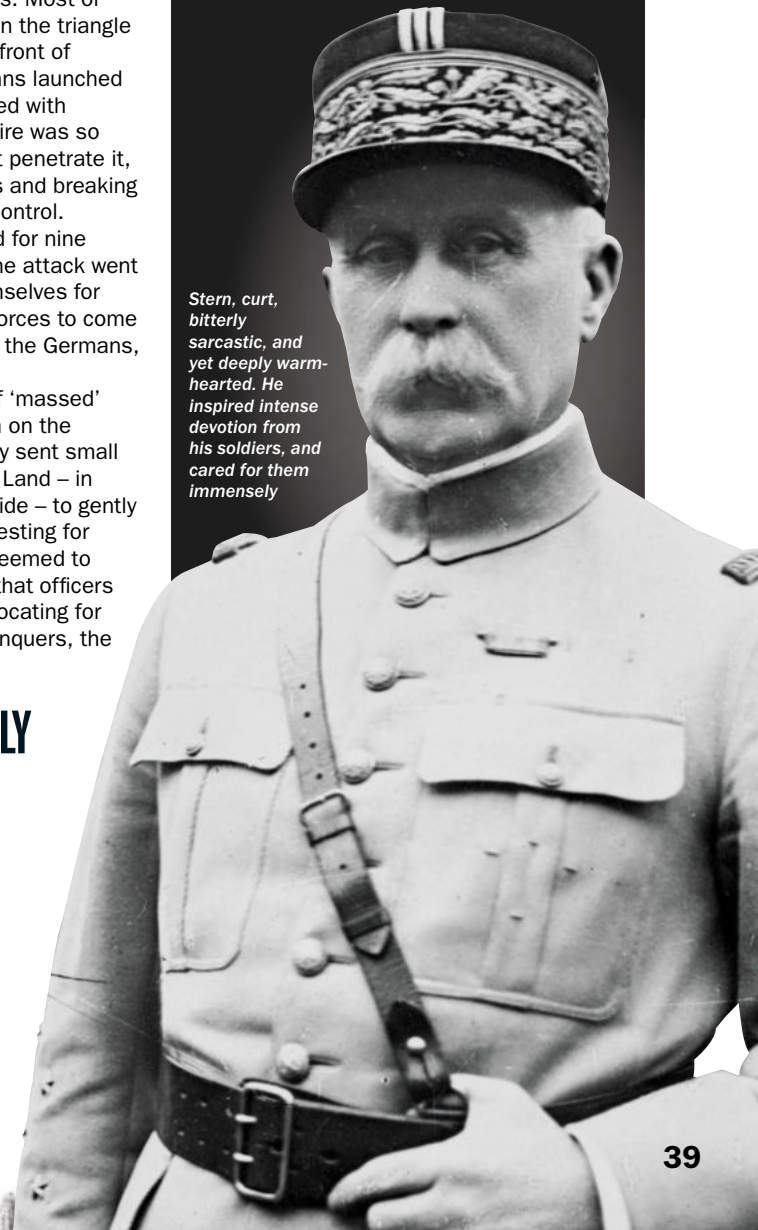
## THE RISE OF PETAIN

**THE SAVIOUR OF VERDUN, A CARING COMMANDER YET A STRICT DISCIPLINARIAN, A MARSHAL OF FRANCE, A COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF AND LATER NAZI COLLABORATOR**

Philippe Pétain has a complicated history and occupies a bizarre place in historical memory. He is simultaneously the man who saved Verdun, and also the President of Vichy France who collaborated with the Nazi regime. A position he won in part because of the reputation he won in World War I.

In WWI he is known for his tactical caution, and his desire to preserve the lives of his men above all other considerations. This made him hugely popular, and made him the obvious choice to succeed Nivelle during the French mutinies of 1917. At Verdun he did what he had always done: he insisted on a careful, scientific prosecution of the war. Pétain paid detailed attention to tactical minutia, especially the deployment of artillery. He completely reorganised the French counter-barrage system, which broke up German attacks, and the logistical structure of French forces during the battle. Pétain was also a long-time advocate for the better use of aerial reconnaissance.

*Stern, curt, bitterly sarcastic, and yet deeply warm-hearted. He inspired intense devotion from his soldiers, and cared for them immensely*





# VERDUN BATTLE MAP

VERDUN WAS FOUGHT IN A SALIENT, PRESENTING ENORMOUS LOGISTICAL CHALLENGES

## 1. OPENING ASSAULT

The opening phase of the German Operation Gericht (sometimes translated as Operation 'judgement' or 'execution site'). The German III, V and XVIII Corps attacked French positions on the eastern bank of the Meuse. They advanced in small packets, often assisted by specialised assault teams armed with flamethrowers. Assault tactics – what might later be called 'stormtroop tactics' – were becoming more advanced by this stage of the war with both the French and Germans doing more to specialise the roles played by their infantry units.

## 2. BOIS DES CAURES

The bois des Caures was one of a series of wooded areas that provided stiffer-than-expected resistance to the initial German assault. Wooded areas remained some of the most feared along the Western Front. They provided excellent cover for defenders, especially from artillery. Wooded areas could also be used to funnel attackers into pre-determined fields of fire where over-lapping machine gun posts would cut down attackers with enfilade fire. Emile Driant, parliamentarian and prolific author, died here commanding the 56th and 59th battalions of chasseurs à pied.

## 3. BRABANT AND SAMOGNEUX

The weight of the initial German assault fell further to the east, towards Haumont and Ornes. Nevertheless, the region around Brabant and Samogneux was critical. If the French fell apart here their position on the right bank would become isolated, and potentially even encircled. French forces with the river at their backs had no good avenue of escape, which greatly increased the likelihood that a minor defeat could turn into a rout.

## 4. RETAKING DOUAUMONT AND VAUX

In October, General Nivelle launched the first of two counteroffensives designed to recapture lost ground and take advantage of the severe mauling German troops had suffered on the Somme since July. The French fired off a huge number of shells (over 800,000) in their preliminary bombardment. This sort of shell expenditure would die off in 1917 as it was simply too costly. In the end, both Douaumont and Vaux were taken easily. The Germans had in part abandoned the area before the attack went in; perhaps a foreshadowing of the Nivelle Offensive.



Left: An aerial photo of Fort Douaumont taken by a German aircraft before the battle

## 5. MORT-HOMME

After making substantial progress on the right bank in February, the German attack shifted towards the left bank in March. Normally, a salient would confer certain advantages to the defenders here, namely the advantage of interior lines. The geography (namely the river), however, actually put the French at a disadvantage when trying to fend off German attacks from multiple directions. French losses around Mort-Homme and Hill 304 were heavy.

## 6. FORT SOUVILLE

One of the 19 forts which made up the Fortified Region of Verdun, Fort Souville, wound up having an unexpected importance in July 1916. Despite the Battle of the Somme having begun on 1 July, some German units were still pressing forward in the Verdun sector. Had Souville fallen, it may have encouraged them to keep pushing, threatening to force the French defenders on the right bank of the Meuse into the river.

## 7. THE VOIE SACRÉE

World War I was an industrial war, and required industrial quantities of materiel. Not just shells, but food, water, corrugated iron, sandbags, and reinforcements needed to arrive in a very timely fashion, and en masse, at the front when needed. Because of the layout of the battlefield the French had to move this great mass of manpower and materiel up a narrow road and rail-line coming up from Bar-le-Duc. This 'Sacred Way' was the only French lifeline for the majority of the battle.

## 8. FINAL DECEMBER OFFENSIVE

The last offensive of the battle of Verdun would again be led by General Mangin. Launched in the direction of Ornes, it recaptured a reasonable chunk of the ground lost to the Germans ten months earlier in the frantic days of late-February. The French fired over a million shells, inundating the area. Combined with the tired state of German forces by December 1916 this all but guaranteed a relatively easy French victory. The sheer number of German prisoners caught (roughly 11,000) is testament to the state of German forces in Verdun.



© Rocio Espin

**“THE FRENCH FIRED OVER A MILLION SHELLS, INUNDATING THE AREA. COMBINED WITH THE TIRED STATE OF GERMAN FORCES BY DECEMBER 1916 THIS ALL BUT GUARANTEED A RELATIVELY EASY FRENCH VICTORY”**



At the bois (wood) d'Haumont the German attack, launched by a reserve Jäger battalion, consisted of just one adjutant and 53 men. These men were followed by a second wave 150 metres behind them consisting of one adjutant, 36 men and two flamethrowers. The third wave, also 150 metres back, consisted of a further 45 men. The Germans had expected the bombardment to kill or incapacitate French defenders, allowing these small teams to effectively take their objectives unopposed.

Of course, some French defenders did survive. At several places the survivors were chasseurs à pied, elite infantry. Despite suffering heavy losses in the opening bombardment – often two thirds of the unit would have been lost before the German infantry even came into sight – their training and morale made them hold on and do everything in their power to slow up the German advance. This vicious defence meant that, despite the overwhelming bombardment on 21 February, the French managed to only lose the bois d'Haumont, and the first positions in the bois des Caures, bois le Comte, bois de Ville, and at L'Herbebois.

In the centre of the line, Colonel Emile Driant's own battalion of chasseurs à pied held on tenaciously in the bois des Caures. By nightfall on 22 February his battalion consisted of just 94 men, down from a theoretical full



strength of over 750 rifles. Driant himself was killed on 22 February while evacuating his command post, which had been zeroed by German 77mm guns. Without the brave resilience of Driant and his chasseurs, the Germans would have poured right through the centre of the line.

The situation continued to deteriorate badly as the battle progressed. French artillery was rapidly pulled back, the village of Brabant was given up without a fight, and the 72e DI (infantry division) that was defending it pulled back towards Samogneau.

Morale began to sink so low that one senior officer in the 72e DI (Lieutenant Colonel Bernard) ordered a detachment of machine guns to be held in reserve at Samogneau to

**Left:** Lieutenant Colonel Émile Driant saw the strategic value of Verdun and was against the removal of arms and men from the positions and forts in 1915

enforce, "the obedience of those who might forget their duty".

The wise retreat from Brabant – which would have quickly been encircled – infuriated senior commanders. General Chrétien, commanding XXX CA, ordered the 72e DI to retake the village, having been told by his superior, General Fernand de Langle de Cary, commander of the Centre Army Group, that no parcel of land was to be voluntarily given up. Instead, land was to be defended, "At any price... cost what it may." This is exactly what Falkenhayn was hoping for.

### Verdun under Pétain

Joseph Joffre, commander-in-chief of the French army, understood the seriousness of the situation and scrambled to keep Verdun from turning into a rout. The Germans continued to advance on the right bank of the Meuse, threatening to cut off French forces and roll up the flank of Verdun. Into this mess he hurled the Second Army, who had been in reserve, resting after its hard fight in Champagne a few months earlier.

Late on 24 February, Joffre called Second Army headquarters at Noailles and asked Pétain to come to his headquarters, GQG, at Chantilly. Pétain, however, was nowhere to

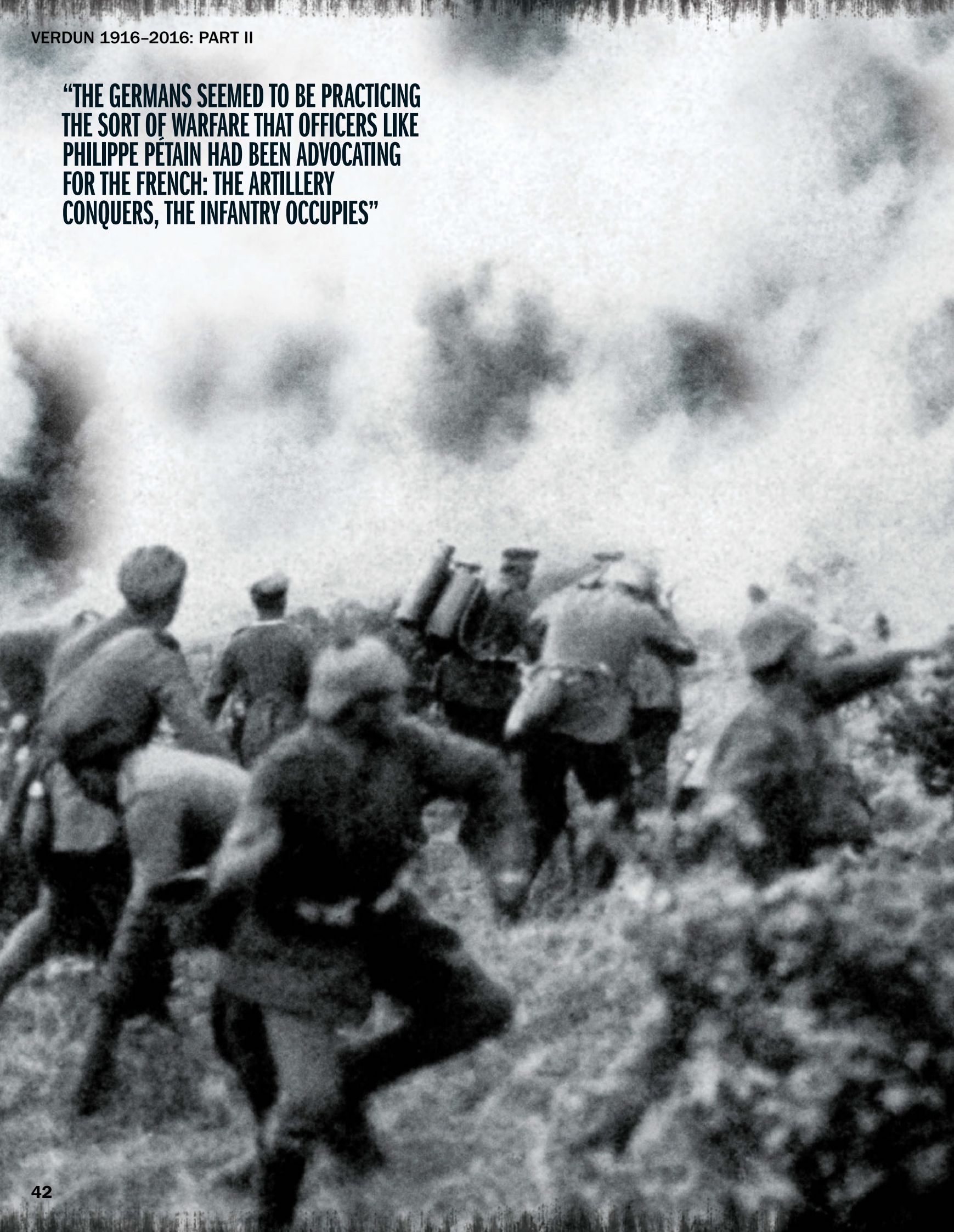
*The land around Fort Douaumont and Verdun was devastated by the battle*

**"WITHOUT THE BRAVE RESILIENCE OF DRIANT AND HIS CHASSEURS, THE GERMANS WOULD HAVE POURED RIGHT THROUGH THE CENTRE OF THE LINE"**





**“THE GERMANS SEEMED TO BE PRACTICING  
THE SORT OF WARFARE THAT OFFICERS LIKE  
PHILIPPE PÉTAIN HAD BEEN ADVOCATING  
FOR THE FRENCH: THE ARTILLERY  
CONQUERS, THE INFANTRY OCCUPIES”**





German soldiers  
charge a French  
position using  
hand grenades and  
flamethrowers to  
clear a path





*Adding a third dimension to the battlefield changed warfare forever*



## THE WAR ABOVE THE RFV

“WE CANNOT HIT WHAT WE CANNOT SEE” – PARAPHRASE OF GENERAL EMILE FAYOLLE, 1915

Air power was a critical component of World War I. Above all else it was an extension of the artillery, the most important arm in the war. Before the Great War terrestrial observation usually provided enough information to prepare basic artillery bombardments and barrages. The sheer mass and depth of the fighting on the Western Front made this impractical. The problems of coordinating mass artillery fire were compounded by the geographic advantages that the Germans maintained throughout the war. After the Battle of the Marne, the Germans had the luxury of retreating back to a defensive line running along just about every significant piece of high ground

in northeastern France and Flanders. Air power became the only means for the Entente powers to actually see what they were firing at.

During Verdun it was essential for both sides. A mixture of fixed observation balloons and heavier-than-air platforms provided the detailed intelligence required to orchestrate the vast and complex artillery preparations both sides pursued in 1916. Pétain had long been interested in the

utility of air power. As far back as spring 1915, he argued in favour of a perpetual mapping of the enemy's lines through aerial reconnaissance. He dreamed of a vast, coordinated map of the enemy trenches so as to quickly respond to any enemy troop movements or artillery action. Essentially, he was inventing a system that would not come into fruition until the 2003 invasion of Iraq and the advent of ‘kill-boxes’!

**“AIR POWER BECAME THE ONLY MEANS FOR THE ENTENTE POWERS TO ACTUALLY SEE WHAT THEY WERE FIRING AT”**

*The wreckage of a downed German bi-plane*





be found. With his staff panicking, Pétain's long-time aide-de-camp, Serrigny, jumped into a staff car and raced off to Paris; he arrived at the Hôtel Terminus at the Gare du Nord Station at 3am. After arguing his way past the hotel manager, he eventually found himself outside of a hotel room staring at Pétain's boots resting in the hallway next to a pair of women's slippers. When Serrigny knocked on the door, Pétain answered, wearing "the scantiest of costumes", to learn that his army was being sent to Verdun. They were due to have an 8am meeting with Joffre, so once he had explained the situation, Serrigny got himself a room to sleep.

Pétain took command of the Verdun sector on 26 February at midnight and within hours he learned of the loss of Fort Douaumont. A small detachment of German troops had taken the fort by surprise without suffering any losses. The details of this loss were hidden from the public, who were instead told of a brave defence against insurmountable odds.

Undaunted, Pétain set about trying to repair the crumbling situation and paid especial attention to improving French logistics. Because Verdun was a salient, the French only had one real route into and out of the battlefield. This consisted of one light rail line and one road up from Bar-le-Duc, and made up the so-called Voie Sacrée, the 'Sacred Way', along which all of the men and materiel would have to travel. Before long, Pétain had the logistical network strengthened and running like clockwork. Over 4,000 lorries and ambulances would make a total of over 6,000 journeys up the Voie Sacrée each day. Vehicles traversed roughly a million miles each week transporting 90,000 men and 50,000 tonnes of supplies; at the height of the battle a lorry passed along the road every 14 seconds. It was a modern, automated, industrial system unlike any other at the time.

Combined with this logistical network, Pétain created what he called his 'Noria' system, which envisioned the Verdun battle and its logistical network as a great water wheel constantly taking water out of the battle and putting fresh resources in. Pétain made sure that men never had to spend more than a few days at the front. If they attacked, or were attacked, units would be immediately pulled out to rest. The general understood how crucially important it was to maintain the quality of his fighting divisions by not letting them be ground into dust.

The Germans, on the other hand, tended to leave units at the front for weeks at a time. The units lost their experienced soldiers and NCOs, making it more difficult for them to successfully integrate replacements. The heavy losses incurred also pushed morale to near the breaking point. Ironically, Pétain proved a much

**"THE DETAILS OF THIS LOSS WERE HIDDEN FROM THE PUBLIC, WHO WERE INSTEAD TOLD OF A BRAVE DEFENCE AGAINST INSURMOUNTABLE ODDS"**



*A French soldier lies partially buried in the soil, a casualty of the tactics to 'bleed France white'*



*A painting depicting French infantry recapturing Fort Douaumont in October 1916*



better attritional warrior than the Germans who started the battle with an expressly attritional model.

Pétain's reforms and refinements were important in shoring up the logistical and morale problems facing the French, but alone they could not do much to stem the tide of German forces consistently making ground against ever-weaker French defenders. By 24 February, the French were down to just 86 heavy guns in the Verdun sector. The infantry was disorganised when Pétain arrived and all but incapable of defending themselves. The only thing that saved them in those critical early days was the German need to move their artillery forward, reorganise the trenches they had already conquered, and extend their lines of supply. Simple Clausewitzian friction saved the French in the opening phase of the battle.

By the end of February the battle on the right (east) bank of the Meuse had slowed to a crawl, leading the Germans to change their axis of attack and begin striking French positions on the left bank. On 2 March, the Germans opened up with a stunning bombardment to

rival that unleashed on 21 February. The first major infantry attack on the left (west) bank went in on 6 March, supported by fire from a German armoured train – their goal was the position of Mort-Homme.

The French responded with a furious counter-barrage, which should have substantially broken up the cohesion of the German attack and given French defenders a chance to hold on. In this instance over 10,000 French shells fell into marshy land and failed to detonate, allowing the

*Left: Believing that the Verdun fortifications could not stand up to modern artillery fire, Joffre ordered that they be stripped to strengthen other positions on the Western Front*

Germans to advance, maintaining much of their strength.

The commander of the sector General Georges de Bazelaire responded by ordering every French unit to immediately retreat upon being attacked, regardless of the circumstances. At that point, maintaining morale and manpower was the only thing that mattered: the ground was already lost. Nevertheless, the 67e DI managed to lose 3,000 men over the course of 6-7 March. Because the French were now more prepared for German attacks, they were able to launch a counterattack the following day. At 7am, two battalions under Colonel Macker of the 92e RI attacked and retook two-thirds of the ground lost the previous day in and around the bois des Corbeaux in just 20 minutes. Colonel Macker had run out of water by this point, and so led the attack with a flask of cheap wine, his cane in his hand, and a cigar in his mouth: the epitome of a French officer of World War I.

All the while Pétain grew increasingly worried that his battered position would break, and urged Joffre to launch the Somme battle as soon as possible. Beginning to get worried himself, Joffre visited the Verdun front on 10 April 1916, the same day that Pétain issued his famous order: 'Courage. On les aura!' ('We'll get 'em!'). Joffre had grown weary

**"COLONEL MACKER HAD RUN OUT OF WATER BY THIS POINT, AND SO LED THE ATTACK WITH A FLASK OF CHEAP WINE, HIS CANE IN HIS HAND, AND A CIGAR IN HIS MOUTH"**

*German troops pick their way past the fallen enemy. By the spring of 1916 the German advance was grinding to a halt*





of Pétain's incessant requests of resupply and reinforcement and hoped to reignite an offensive spirit in the general.

It was during this trip that Joffre first saw General Robert Nivelle – the man who would succeed him as commander-in-chief – lead men in combat. Nivelle was wedded to the attack, and maintained a vigorous posture whenever possible. Even though his attacks were costly, and won no real strategic advantage, they caught Joffre's eye. Soon after this visit Joffre promoted Pétain, making him commander of the Centre Army Group, and promoted Nivelle to the head of Pétain's Second Army. This gave him tactical control of the battle from 26 April until its end in December. Pétain's critical leadership of the Battle of Verdun had lasted only two months.

As the months passed, the battle carried on along similar lines: attack and counterattack, with small areas of ground exchanging hands repeatedly, but on the whole tending to fall more and more into German possession.

The Germans crept closer to Verdun, eating up French manpower by the thousands. The strategic reserve that Joffre had hoped to use in a Franco-British attack astride the Somme river was chewed up in the Meuse Mill. Whereas Joffre and Foch's initial plan called for 40 French divisions to attack alongside the British on the Somme, the losses suffered at Verdun would mean that only 12 would go over the top on 1 July 1916.

Despite the small numbers, they managed to capture all of their objectives at the cost of only 1,560 casualties, a rather different experience compared to the well-known debacle of the British on the same day.

### The counterattacks

German pressure ebbed and flowed in the Verdun sector until July. Within a fortnight of the Somme offensive beginning, German attacks all but ceased. Whatever reserves the Germans had in the area were quickly shuttled north to protect against the French and British attacks in Picardy. Even before then, Nivelle had launched a series of counterattacks against the Germans. In late-May he ordered General Mangin to recapture Fort Douaumont.

Despite Mangin's blind confidence in his ability to retake the fort – and despite excellent French efforts to assert control of the air, with six of the eight German observation balloons taken out – the attack was a disaster. The artillery preparation had been cut from five days to a little over two to save artillery shells for the Somme. The intense German counter-bombardment meant that French units were severely depleted before they even went over the top. Some of the lead companies – the 129e RI, for example – were down to only 45 men. On 22 May, at 11.50am, the attack went in anyway. By 12pm it had utterly failed.

Under Nivelle the French would eventually retake both forts Vaux and Douaumont, the

latter on 24 October 1916. This was hugely important for French morale and helped capstone the French army's long and arduous trial along the banks of the Meuse.

In strictly military terms, however, Douaumont's recapture was probably not terribly important. The Germans had already been pulling out of the sector – Vaux was recaptured without a fight – and the battle had long before descended into a series of brief, isolated engagements followed by long periods of quiet. After the failure to capture Fort Souville in July, the Germans did not make any more serious offensives in the sector.

The French counteroffensives largely occurred in late-October and early-November with a brief flare-up in the middle of December. Long gone were the hectic days of February to July, but nevertheless, this final phase is just as important.

Despite capturing only a few objectives of dubious military value, and at a high cost in casualties and munitions, Nivelle's recasting of Verdun as an offensive, rather than defensive, battle won him substantial praise.

Ultimately, it paved the way for his succession of Joffre as command-in-chief in December 1916. The path then would lead inexorably to the disastrous Nivelle Offensive of April 1917 and the French mutinies that followed. It was a final dark reminder of the burden borne by French soldiers along the banks of the Meuse in 1916.

## COUNTING THE COST

### FRENCH AND GERMAN LOSSES WERE NEARLY IDENTICAL AT VERDUN. SO, WHO WON?

During the Battle of Verdun, both the French and German armies lost around 350,000 casualties each, with the exact numbers still in contention. These figures sound shocking, but in reality it was only half as bad as the Somme, which saw roughly 600,000 casualties on either side. So, why does Verdun stick in our minds?

In part, this is owing to the horrific conditions in the Verdun salient, which were really archetypal for World War I: a true moonscape, complete with mud, blood, the dead and the dying. The sense of endless carnage for no real strategic gain (or loss) stuck in the minds of soldiers very early on. It was here at Verdun that French soldiers were first heard bleating like sheep being led to the slaughter as they marched towards the sound of the guns. Pétain's 'Noria' system helped to reduce the stress and strain that his men experienced while operating in the Verdun sector.

Ultimately, there was only so much he could do to lessen the stress of suffering heavy casualties often in very short periods of time. On occasion, some units were being all but wiped out in a matter of days.

What did these 700,000 Verdun casualties mean? Following the battle, the Allies launched major attacks on the Somme, in Galicia (the Brusilov Offensive) and in Italy. On the Western Front alone Germany had fewer than 1.2 million casualties (nearly as many as they had lost in 1914 and 1915 combined). In the second half of 1916 the Germans lost 26 per cent of their forces on the Western Front, and a further 15 per cent of the forces they had on the Eastern Front. The losses were staggering. In the brutal game of attrition, Germany was simply outnumbered and could not afford to lose simply equal numbers of men in battles against the powers of Britain, France and Russia.

Cemetery to the fallen located at Douaumont. It contains 16,142 graves of known combatants







## Heroes of the Medal of Honor

# SALVATORE A GIUNTA

This US Army Sergeant saved a comrade from Taliban fighters in the infamous Korengal Valley, eastern Afghanistan

WORDS LEIGH NEVILLE

Staff Sergeant Salvatore ('Sal') Augustine Giunta was born in Iowa, on 21 January 1985. While working at a Subway fast food restaurant, he heard a radio advertisement offering free T-shirts at the local US Army recruiters. He later joked: "I like free T-shirts." After giving the idea some thought, he eventually signed on the dotted line, joining the US Army in 2003 and becoming a paratrooper the following year. Surprisingly, considering later events, Giunta washed out of the Army's elite Ranger School before he was posted to the storied B (Battle) Company of 2nd Battalion, the 503rd Airborne Infantry Regiment.

Based in Vicenza, Italy, the 503rd Regiment was known as 'the Rock' in recognition of its legendary combat jump onto the Japanese island fortress of Corregidor in February 1945. It was also one of the first US Army infantry units to be deployed to Vietnam where it received Presidential and Meritorious Unit Citations. The unit has since served in both Iraq and Afghanistan.

Giunta's first deployment to Afghanistan was for a yearlong tour beginning in March 2005, based in the city of Kandahar. For the first three months, his unit was assigned as the Quick Reaction Force (QRF) for southern Afghanistan, ready to rescue trapped soldiers – a role that sounded more adventurous than it proved to be. Later, he and his unit were moved to a remote base at the foot of the Hindu Kush Mountains where he experienced his first combat action at the hands of a Taliban ambush.

Giunta also suffered his first experience with the often-duplicious Afghan National Police (ANP), when an argument ended in the Afghan Police aiming their AK-47s at the American forces. He was even ordered to man a heavy machinegun, ready to open fire on the ANP if necessary. He was later awarded his first

Purple Heart after being wounded by shrapnel in a firefight with insurgents.

Deciding Army life wasn't for him, Giunta prepared to put in his paperwork but was 'stop-lossed'; a process that forces a soldier to stay in the Army because of the strain placed on manpower thanks to the dual wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Giunta soon deployed to Afghanistan again for a 14-month tour starting in May 2007, serving as a fire team leader.

The location his unit deployed to – the infamous Korengal Valley – has since become widely known thanks to the documentary film *Restrepo*, which detailed that horrific tour. From the incongruously named Outpost Vegas, Giunta and his fellow soldiers patrolled across the inhospitable mountains and forests of the Korengal, being regularly ambushed and engaging in long-range firefights with the Taliban. In October 2007, Operation Rock Avalanche was launched in a hunt for insurgent weapons caches.

Four days into the previously uneventful mission, a sister platoon was ambushed. One soldier was killed and two seriously wounded. The audacious insurgents even managed to steal the men's weapons and night-vision goggles. On 25 October 2007, Battle Company deployed on a follow-up mission to attempt to recover those stolen weapons.

Giunta's platoon, the 1st Platoon of Battle Company, was assigned to provide overwatch from the mountainous heights above Battle Company's 2nd and 3rd Platoons who searched through an Afghan village in the valley below. Giunta's squad, 1st Squad, were in the lead. After a day of no enemy contact, they were headed home to their Combat Outpost along the narrow Gatigal Spur as night began to fall.

Suddenly, the encroaching darkness erupted with a cacophony of gunfire. More than a dozen Taliban insurgents opened fire on the patrol, with rocket propelled grenades (RPGs) and machineguns. The insurgents had sprung what was known as an 'L-Shaped ambush' that allowed them to fire along the length of the patrol at the soldiers who had been moving in single file to reduce the effects of any mortars or improvised explosive devices (IEDs).

Sergeant Joshua Brennan, acting as lead scout, was immediately hit as was the second soldier in the patrol, Specialist Frank Eckrode, a squad automatic weapon (SAW) gunner. Giunta himself was hit by a bullet in the initial fusillade that was stopped by his body armour. A second bullet tore through the assault pack he was wearing on his back.

Giunta quickly understood that his men were receiving accurate fire from at least two directions and ordered his SAW gunner, Private Kaleb Casey, and his grenadier, Private Garrett Clary, to spread out to ensure the enemy could not flank their position. Meanwhile, Staff





*Pictured here in Italy, Giunta almost quit the army but was forced to stay due to the stop-loss policy*

“You charged forward through extreme enemy fire, embodying the warrior ethos that says, “I will never leave a fallen comrade.” Your actions disrupted a devastating ambush before it could claim more lives”

President Barack Obama





**“I wish I had processed the image sooner; maybe then I could have killed them both”**

## 02 The ambush

Suddenly, over a dozen hidden Taliban open fire on the American patrol. Using at least four PKM machineguns and several RPGs, the ambush temporarily stuns the Americans who desperately try to find cover amongst the trees and rocks with enemy fire directed at them from seemingly every direction.

## 06 Medevac

Another medic arrives and stabilises Brennan whilst a medevac helicopter lands to evacuate the wounded. As Giunta and his comrades withdraw, B1B bombers and Apache helicopter gunships lay waste to the Taliban firing positions. Sadly, Giunta's courageous efforts are in vain and Brennan dies in surgery.

## 04 Fighting back

Staff Sergeant Erick Gallardo, just ahead of Giunta, tries to make it to the wounded but is shot in the head. Giunta breaks cover to drag him to safety. Gallardo's helmet saves him. Giunta leads him and two of his men in a counterattack to reach the wounded.

## 05 The rescue

After reaching Eckrode, Giunta heads off to find Brennan. Two Taliban have captured him and are carrying him away. Giunta kills one of the insurgents and wounds the other, saving Brennan from a grisly fate. Giunta provides first aid waiting for the platoon medic who have already been killed.



## “We would have fought tooth and nail to find his body or find Brennan. Giunta definitely saved a lot more lives that night”

Staff Sergeant Erick Gallardo

**03 Wounded in action** Both Brennan and Eckrode are shot and wounded. Other casualties are suffered in 2nd and 3rd squads. Giunta moves his men into cover and begins to fire back. He knows they have been caught in a classic L-Shaped ambush and redeploys his men to make sure the enemy cannot flank them.

**01 The patrol** Giunta's six-man group from 1st Squad moves along a narrow mountaintop spur as darkness begins to fall in the Korengal Valley. Travelling in single-file, Sergeant Joshua Brennan is in the lead followed by SAW gunner Specialist Frank Eckrode. Giunta is fourth in line, scanning the growing shadows with his M4 carbine.

Sergeant Erick Gallardo attempted to reach the wounded men at the head of the column, but was driven back by heavy enemy fire. Running back toward Giunta, Gallardo was hit in the helmet by an AK-47 round and fell.

Seeing this, Giunta braved the incoming RPGs and small arms fire to drag him back into cover. Thankfully, Gallardo's helmet had done its job and the bullet had only grazed his head – moments later he was back in the fight. Giunta, Gallardo and Clary began throwing hand grenades at the enemy positions using the muzzle flashes to guide them while Casey kept up withering suppressive fire with his SAW. They were determined to reach Brennan and the trapped Eckrode (whose SAW had jammed).

Finally, the group reached the wounded Eckrode who had been shot four times. Two of the bullets had also been stopped by his body armour. Giunta said in his 2012 autobiography, *Living With Honor*, “the grenades had paid off. They're loud and they're scary and they make things blow up. It's hard to keep firing an AK-47 on target with grenades blowing up all around you.” Although the enemy was still shooting, the fire had slackened somewhat, allowing Giunta the opportunity to move forward to search for the fallen Sergeant Brennan. The problem was that, in the chaos of the ambush, he had disappeared.

Still being shot at, Giunta broke through some foliage to an incredible scene. Three figures were moving away from the ambush. He could just make out two were wearing Afghan clothing (the shalwar kameez) and carrying AK-47s. The third figure had hands and feet tied, while being carried by the other two. Giunta recognised the camouflage uniform and realised it was Sergeant Brennan – captured by the Taliban.

Aiming his M4 carbine, he opened fire. “I wish I had processed the image sooner; maybe then I could have killed them both. As it was, I killed one – he dropped on the spot – and hit the other. The wounded man limped away and then disappeared – it looked as though he leaped off a cliff or at least rolled down a steep

embankment; either way, I hope he was dead by the time he reached bottom,” Giunta wrote later.

Rushing to the wounded Sergeant Brennan, Giunta dragged him back into cover as the Taliban fire again intensified. Calling for a medic, Giunta kept Brennan alive, reassuring him that help was on its way. Unknown to Giunta at the time, the platoon medic, Specialist Hugo ‘Doc’ Mendoza, had been hit in the femoral artery in the initial ambush and was already dead. Eventually, another medic from one of the other platoons arrived and performed an emergency tracheotomy on Brennan to stabilise him enough for medical evacuation (medevac).

Brennan had been shot a half dozen times and had suffered shrapnel injuries from the RPGs. Under the covering fire of Apache helicopter gunships, a medevac helicopter briefly touched down to evacuate Brennan, Eckrode and several other wounded. Although Brennan reached the field hospital in time, he subsequently died from his wounds. That night, back at the Combat Outpost, Giunta's company commander began the paperwork to nominate Giunta for the Medal of Honor.

Giunta and 1st Platoon finally rotated out of the Korengal in July 2008. A few years later the US Army closed its remote outposts and withdrew from the valley. In November 2010, Giunta was awarded the Medal of Honor by President Barack Obama. He attended the ceremony at the White House with his wife and a large number of his platoon mates. Giunta finally left the Army in 2011.

He claims his actions were unremarkable; “I didn't run up to do anything heroic. Everybody's been shot at, and I might as well run forward,” he said in an US Army interview. He concedes it was, “one of the worst days of my life, and when I revisit it... It kind of guts me a little bit more every time. It's a huge honour... but it does bring back memories of all the people I'd love to share this moment with who are no longer with us.” At the time of its awarding, Giunta was the first living Medal of Honor recipient since the Vietnam War.

Staff Sergeant Giunta and his squad mates in Korengal Valley, know as the ‘Valley of Death’





Great Battles

# BLenheim

Seeking to head off a Franco-Bavarian army threatening Vienna, the Duke of Marlborough unfurls a bold but brilliant plan

WORDS WILLIAM WELSH





Lieutenant General Lord John Cutts' British infantry assaults the village of Blenheim at the start of the battle

## BLenheim, Bavaria 13 AUGUST 1704

The late summer sun beat down on the verdant fields on the left bank of the upper Danube, as long lines of scarlet-coated infantry advanced on the village of Blenheim. French soldiers peered from behind barricades as the enemy advanced determinedly towards their position. When the English came to within 30 yards, the French fired a deafening volley. Cries and groans went up in the English ranks as musket balls found their targets. Wounded and dying men dropped to the ground.

The French fired through holes in walls and from behind overturned carts. When the English reached the barricades, they delivered a crashing volley at point-blank range and then lunged at the enemy with bayonets. The French fired yet more volleys in response, and, finding themselves exposed to such brutal fire, the English drifted back down the slope to regroup. However, their valiant commander, Brigadier General Archibald Rowe, had been mortally wounded. His broken body now lay crumpled at the barricades, along with those who had tried, in vain, to reach him.

To the 2,800 men of Rowe's Brigade, it may have seemed like murder to march against such a well-fortified position. However, allied army commander John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough, had crafted a cunning plan to deceive the French. He had no qualms sacrificing men when necessary, and the purpose of Rowe's attack was to bait the French into reinforcing Blenheim.

On the opposite end of the field, Prince Eugene of Savoy was launching a similar attack with his Imperial troops against the village of Lutzingen. As for the Franco-Bavarian army, its commander, Marshal Camille d'Hostun, duc de Tallard, had deliberately chosen to defend the line of a stream that separated the two armies. His army was spread out along a four-mile front on the Plain of Hochstadt. Tallard believed the flat ground behind the Nebel would give his French cavalrymen ample room to outmanoeuvre their counterparts. This clash of arms, on the hot afternoon of 13 August 1704, would be the turning point a multi-national dispute that would rage for over a decade.

### History of aggression

When the sickly King Charles II of Spain died childless on 1 November 1700, he left his throne to French King Louis XIV's grandson, Duke Philip of Anjou. Although the French took steps to allay the fear of other European nations that the two crowns might unite at some future date, France's enemies nevertheless grew suspicious of the French king's intentions, given his past aggressions. It did not help the matter that Louis XIV sent his troops into the Spanish Netherlands in February 1701, to seize the border forts that served as a buffer between the French and Dutch. This only served as proof that the acquisition of the Spanish throne was meant to help facilitate French expansion.



Accordingly, in 1701, England, the United Provinces, and the Holy Roman Empire revived the Grand Alliance against France. The ensuing 13-year conflict became known as the War of the Spanish Succession. When 52-year-old John Churchill, Earl of Marlborough, arrived in the United Provinces with 12,000 British troops in June 1702, the allies took the offensive. Marlborough helped the Dutch recover some of the French-held fortresses, for which Queen Anne proclaimed him duke in December 1702.

Marlborough felt stifled fighting alongside the cautious Dutch, so in late 1703 he received approval to campaign in southern Germany. Bavaria had defected from the alliance that year and joined France. Fearing that a combined Franco-Bavarian army might topple the emperor's Imperial armies and capture Vienna, Marlborough planned to strike a pre-emptive blow against Bavaria.

On 19 May 1704, Marlborough led his 20,000-strong army south. He planned to join forces with Prince Eugene of Savoy's Imperial army operating along the Upper Rhine. Marlborough decided to cross the Danube at Donauworth, but the crossing was blocked by a Bavarian force entrenched on the Schellenberg Heights overlooking the town. Bavarian Elector Maximilian-Emanuel sent Marshal Count Jean

Baptist d'Arco's 12,000-man army to obstruct Marlborough. The duke launched a frontal assault on 2 July that smashed through the Bavarian line in one location, forcing it to withdraw from its position.



In the face of Marlborough's invasion of Bavaria, all of the French and Bavarian forces in the duchy assembled in the fortified town of Augsburg to await further reinforcements from France. Tallard arrived in the town with substantial French reinforcements on 3 August. The 56,000-strong Franco-Bavarian army crossed to left bank of the Danube, threatening Marlborough's supply line. On 11 August, the duke and Prince Eugene joined forces.

**Pinning the flanks**

Marlborough dispatched a large body of cavalry to protect the allied army as it broke camp the following morning. This advance guard, which rode west in the early hours of 13 August, took up a blocking position in farm fields. The allies formed into nine columns, four of which belonged to Prince Eugene's 16,000-man right wing and five to Marlborough's 36,000-man left wing. Prince Eugene's wing departed first as it had a longer march. Marlborough intended to make strong attacks on the villages at either end of the enemy line.

To ensure that no more allied troops than necessary were funnelled into the attacks on Blenheim and Lutzingen, both commanders would have to lead from the front and closely monitor the diversionary attacks. These assaults were to be strong enough to compel the Franco-Bavarian army to commit its reserves to both flanks in the belief that

# OPPOSING FORCES

VS

GRAND ALLIANCE	FRANCO-BAVARIAN ARMY
<b>LEADERS</b>	<b>LEADERS</b>
John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough & Eugene, Prince of Savoy	Marshal Camille d'Hostun, duc de Tallard; Ferdinand, comte de Marsin; Maximilian Emanuel II von Wittelsbach, Elector of Bavaria
<b>INFANTRY</b>	<b>INFANTRY</b>
67 battalions	89 battalions
<b>CAVALRY</b>	<b>CAVALRY</b>
181 squadrons	124 squadrons
<b>GUNS</b>	<b>GUNS</b>
66	90
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
52,000 men	56,000 men



Prince Eugene of Savoy (left) and the Duke of Marlborough (right) were kindred spirits on the battlefield. Working in close co-operation they defeated a larger army at Blenheim



The Duke of Marlborough's invasion of Bavaria in 1704 successfully countered the Franco-Bavarian offensive



the allies were attempting to turn one or both flanks. Since Marlborough's wing would deliver the main attack in the left-centre late in the day, he would have to make sure that Lieutenant General Lord John Cutts made a convincing attack on Blenheim.

The French observed the allied advance about 7am, but Tallard did not order the troops to be awakened for another hour. When he became convinced his enemy was preparing a major attack, he ordered the tents packed up and sent to the rear. By 10am, Marlborough's troops were deployed for battle, but Prince Eugene's men were still making their way toward their jump-off positions. Previously, at 8am, French artillery crews had begun shelling enemy formations, and Marlborough had his men lie down to reduce casualties. Tallard took command of the right wing opposite Marlborough. The Elector and French Marshal Count Ferdinand of Marsin commanded their left wing, opposite Prince Eugene.

At 9am, the three Franco-Bavarian commanders climbed to the belfry of the Blenheim church to observe the enemy deployment. A heated discussion ensued about how to defend the Nebel – the Elector and Marsin favoured deploying their troops directly behind the stream so that they could

## **"IN THE FACE OF MARLBOROUGH'S INVASION OF BAVARIA, ALL OF THE FRENCH AND BAVARIAN FORCES IN THE DUCHY ASSEMBLED IN THE FORTIFIED TOWN OF AUGSBURG TO AWAIT FURTHER REINFORCEMENTS FROM FRANCE"**

contest the allied crossing, thereby driving up enemy casualties. But Tallard, who was sceptical that the allies would send infantry across the Nebel, favoured placing his cavalry and infantry well back from the Nebel so that it could counterattack over dry ground any enemy force that managed to cross the stream. Tallard prevailed, although Marsin and the Elector intended to command their wing as they saw fit.

On the south side of the Nebel, where the Franco-Bavarian waited to receive the attack, there was a third village, Oberglaue, which was closer to Lutzingen than it was to Blenheim. While the Elector took command of the Bavarians defending Lutzingen, Marsin positioned himself with the French defending Oberglaue. The rest of the ground from Oberglaue to Blenheim was Tallard's responsibility.

The shortest route of advance for the allied army was across the Nebel toward Blenheim.

Lieutenant General Marquis Philippe de Clérambault, who commanded nine garrisoned infantry battalions inside Blenheim.

Behind the village were 18 more infantry battalions that constituted the right wing's infantry reserve. The only other infantry belonging to Tallard's wing were nine inexperienced infantry battalions, which were stationed behind his cavalry.

Marlborough's chief of artillery, Colonel Holcroft Blood, had his guns in position at 10am and they engaged the French artillery on the opposite side of the Nebel. Meanwhile, allied engineers began building five causeways that would be needed to move men and guns over the marsh on both sides of the river.

Shortly after 12pm, a mounted courier from Prince Eugene handed Marlborough a dispatch stating that most of Eugene's forces were in position and ready to attack. This was the

*Blenheim prevented the French from extending their influence across all of Europe*





news Marlborough had waited for all morning. He sent an order to Cutts instructing him to advance on Blenheim.

Rowe's Brigade, which had taken cover in a dip in the terrain 150 yards past the Nebel, had been pounded by a battery of 24-pounders near the village, and anything seemed better than staying in that spot. Cutts' infantry attacked two more times during the next two hours with the same results. At that point, Marlborough rode over to Cutts and told him to deploy his men 60 yards from the French barricades and make it appear as if they might attack again at any moment.

The tactic had the desired result, because by mid-afternoon Clérambault had ordered the reserve battalions to move into the village and into the cornfield on the west side of the village. This meant that 12,000 French infantry, which was the majority of Tallard's foot, was committed to the defence of Blenheim. It was exactly what Marlborough wanted.

### Bavarian payback

Prince Eugene's musketeers had a difficult time advancing across the broken ground near the Swabian Jura, where a number of mountain brooks fed the Nebel. The allied attack in that sector began when Field Marshal Prince Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau led two brigades of hardy Prussians toward Lutzingen. They ran headlong into Bavarian infantry under D'Arco, who was anxious to settle a score against the allies for having been whipped at the Schellenberg. The Elector had massed his artillery at Lutzingen, and it did great damage to the Prussian lines. When Prince Eugene saw the Prussians flagging, he fed two brigades of Danish foot into the fight.

The advantage lay with the defenders, and a Bavarian counterattack scattered the Prussians. Indeed, the Prussians were so shaken they fled well beyond the point they had started their attack, but Prince Eugene rallied them. Most of his guns had deployed at Oberglaue, and therefore his infantry advancing on Lutzingen lacked artillery support. By mid-afternoon Eugene had made no headway against the Bavarians.

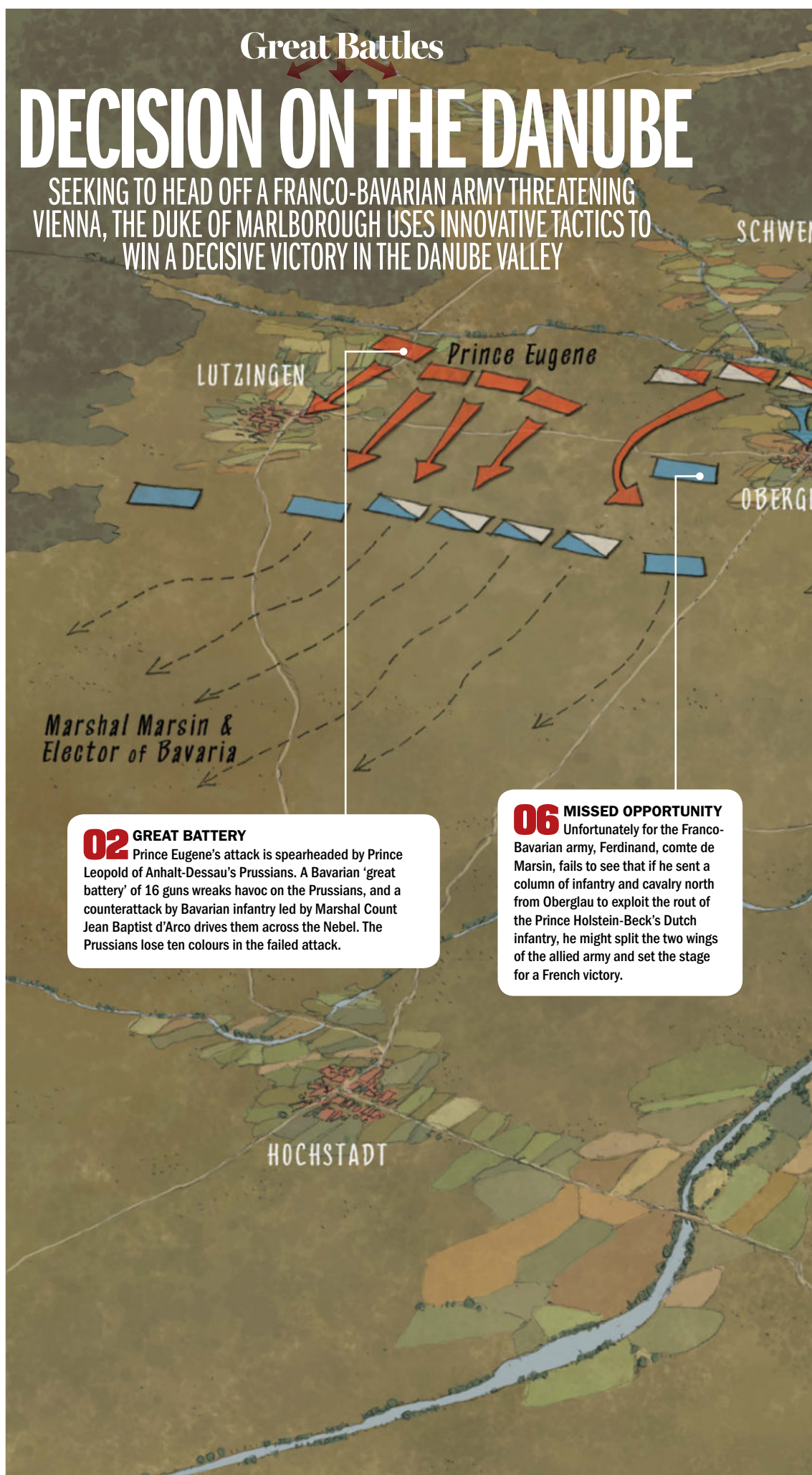
Tallard's strength was that he had 64 squadrons of cavalry totalling approximately 8,000 troopers. The most dignified of these were eight squadrons of Gens d'Armes, which were the king's household cavalry. They had a long tradition of battlefield prowess, and their ranks contained many aristocrats. However, the French and English cavalry contingents fought differently. As a general rule, the French cavalry trotted halfway towards their target, halted to fire a volley, and then charged home with their swords. In blunt contrast, the English simply charged home with their swords, which enabled them to focus on manoeuvring to the best advantage during an attack. It soon became apparent which approach worked best.

During Cutts' attack on Blenheim, Lieutenant General Beat-Jacques, Comte de Zurloeben, had launched spoiling attacks with the French Gens d'Armes against Cutts' unprotected right flank. Cutts had requested assistance from one of Lieutenant General Henry Lumley's brigades stationed nearby, which was commanded by Colonel Francis Palmes. In response to

## Great Battles

# DECISION ON THE DANUBE

SEEKING TO HEAD OFF A FRANCO-BAVARIAN ARMY THREATENING VIENNA, THE DUKE OF MARLBOROUGH USES INNOVATIVE TACTICS TO WIN A DECISIVE VICTORY IN THE DANUBE VALLEY



### 02 GREAT BATTERY

Prince Eugene's attack is spearheaded by Prince Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau's Prussians. A Bavarian 'great battery' of 16 guns wreaks havoc on the Prussians, and a counterattack by Bavarian infantry led by Marshal Count Jean Baptist d'Arco drives them across the Nebel. The Prussians lose ten colours in the failed attack.

### 06 MISSED OPPORTUNITY

Unfortunately for the Franco-Bavarian army, Ferdinand, comte de Marsin, fails to see that if he sent a column of infantry and cavalry north from Oberglaue to exploit the rout of the Prince Holstein-Beck's Dutch infantry, he might split the two wings of the allied army and set the stage for a French victory.



#### 04 DANGEROUS CROSSING

As Marlborough prepares for his main attack on the middle of the enemy position, allied infantry crosses the Nebel and furnishes protective fire for cavalymen who have dismounted to lead their horses over the stream.

#### 03 PUT TO FLIGHT

French morale plummets when the mounted French Gens d'Armes are defeated by a smaller force of English cavalry. "What? Is it possible? The Gentlemen of France fleeing?" remarks Bavarian Elector Maximilian-Emmanuel, who watched the shocking defeat. Tallard later said the attack was the first indication that his army might lose the battle.

#### 01 STORM OF LEAD

For his diversionary attack on the village of Blenheim, Marlborough gives Lt Gen John Cutts 20 infantry battalions and 15 cavalry squadrons. At 1pm, Cutts' six lines of soldiers advance with little cover, having to endure punishment not only from hundreds of concealed musketeers, but also from a battery of four 24-pounders adjacent to the village. One-third of Rowe's brigade is either killed or wounded in the near-suicidal attack.

Tallard

SONDERHEIM

WOLPERSTETTIN

UNTERGLAW

Palmes

Duke Lord Cutts

BLenheim

#### 07 COVERING FIRE

After Lt Gen Charles Churchill's assault force crosses the Nebel, the cavalry moves in front of the infantry. The infantry battalions leave gaps in their lines so that the cavalry can fall back and reform behind them unhindered.

#### 05 OUTWITTED COMMANDER

Lt Gen Marquis Philippe de Clérambault, the commander of the French infantry posted at Blenheim, crams so many musketeers inside the village that there is no space on the perimeter for many of them to fire at the enemy.

#### 08 UNMATCHED FIREPOWER

Lt Gen Charles Churchill's 18 infantry battalions easily outgun the nine French battalions they encounter on open ground south of the Nebel. The allied infantry enjoy greater firepower because it uses platoon firing, by which platoons fire successively in groups, so that a steady fire is maintained without pause. In contrast, the French line fires in unison with a pause to reload.

ALLIES

infantry  
cavalry

FRENCH

infantry  
cavalry





Cutts' request, Palmes led his five squadrons of crack horse across the Nebel. Zurlauben immediately counterattacked with all eight of his Gens d'Armes squadrons. Zurlauben sought to envelop Palmes' shorter line, but Palmes perceived the threat and took action. He ordered the squadron on each flank to advance at an angle and then wheel to strike the French flank. The English cavalry executed the move with great skill. Outmanoeuvred, Zurlauben's troopers raced back to the protection of the main line with the English horsemen following closely on their heels.

Both sides had watched the clash of these elite cavalry squadrons with fascination. The outcome for the French was humiliating, and Tallard was deeply unnerved. In the long term, this event's effect on morale was far greater than its minor tactical significance.

Meanwhile, Marsin had deployed 16 battalions of French infantry in Oberglau. Lieutenant General Prince Karl Rudolf of Württemberg-Neuenstadt led two brigades of Danish cavalry forward in the early afternoon in a half-hearted attack on the village.

As the afternoon wore on, Marlborough feared that the strong French position at Oberglau might endanger the right flank of his attack on the centre, so he ordered an

*Below: John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough, is shown in a Victory Tapestry at Blenheim Palace. Marlborough led from the front, issuing orders throughout the day to counter enemy moves that threatened to derail his brilliant battle plan*

## "IT WAS AT THIS STAGE THAT MARLBOROUGH READIED THE HAMMER BLOW HE WAS PLANNING TO DELIVER TO THE FRENCH ARMY"

infantry attack on the fortified village. At 4pm, Lieutenant General Horn of Marlborough's wing ordered Major General Anton Günther Fürst von Holstein-Beck to lead a division of Dutch foot against Oberglau.

The French infantry at Oberglau repulsed the attack, so Marsin ordered one of the four brigades to launch a counterattack. In compliance with these orders, Charles O'Brien, 5th Viscount Clare, led his 1,500-strong Catholic Irish émigrés clad in bright red jackets against Holstein-Beck's wavering infantry. The Irishmen's savage volleys overwhelmed the Dutch attack.

Holstein-Beck cast about for assistance. Seeing 1,000 Imperial cuirassiers sitting idly nearby, he begged their commander, Major General Graf von Fugger, to drive off the Irish. But Fugger's armoured cavalry belonged to Prince Eugene's wing. Fugger said he would only do so if ordered by Prince Eugene. Shortly afterwards, Holstein-Beck was gravely wounded. Marlborough, who seemed to be everywhere at once on his white horse, realised that the right centre was dangerously exposed, and sent a message to Eugene requesting reinforcements. Eugene gave Marlborough control of Fugger's Brigade, and the duke ordered the cavalry commander

to counterattack Marsin's horse. Fugger's cuirassiers gave them cold steel and drove them back.

Marlborough next sent Hanoverian and Hessian regiments to take up a blocking position so that the French at Oberglau could not disrupt his pending attack. The duke also ordered his artillery chief to redirect his guns against Oberglau.

### Massing forces

It was at this stage that Marlborough readied the hammer blow he was planning to deliver to the French army. In total, he planned to send 22,000 men (14,000 infantry and 8,000 cavalry) against the enemy centre. Lieutenant General Charles Marlborough, the duke's younger brother, would lead the attack, with the men formed in four lines, two of cavalry and two of infantry.

Seven battalions of allied infantry crossed the Nebel at 3pm and formed into a line of battle to cover the crossing of the rest of the assault force. Using the platoon firing system, they shattered Zurlauben's piecemeal cavalry attacks. Once Lieutenant General Churchill's entire force was safely across the Nebel around 4pm, the two lines of cavalry rode through the gaps in the first rank of infantry and reformed.







Images: Alamy, Corbis, Thinkstock

## “WHAT WAS LEFT OF THE ONCE IMPRESSIVE FRANCO-BAVARIAN ARMY WAS NOT ENOUGH TO THREATEN VIENNA”

To bolster the allied centre, Blood sent nine field guns across the Nebel.

Zurlauben next deployed all available cavalry against Churchill's much larger force. Despite a valiant effort, the French squadrons could accomplish nothing more than forcing the allied cavalry to temporarily withdraw. During a clash with Lieutenant General Cuno Josua von Bülow's Hanoverian horse, Zurlauben was severely wounded.

Zurlauben was replaced by the Marquis de Humières, but this time the situation was growing desperate for Tallard's wing. By 5.30pm, the nine allied cavalry brigades participating in the main attack on the French centre finally succeeded in driving de Humières' cavalry from the field. Realising his wing was crumbling, Tallard ordered his nine green infantry battalions to hold the low ridge south of the Nebel at all costs.

To their credit, the raw French foot, all of whom had been recruited at the outset of the war, made a good show of themselves. Unfortunately, they were heavily outgunned. The withering fire of Churchill's platoons, aided by Blood's field guns firing canister, opened gaps in the French squares, and the allied horse finished off those not killed by musket or artillery fire.

Once all resistance, save the French infantry within the confines of the village of Blenheim, had been crushed on Tallard's right wing, Churchill ordered one of his cavalry divisions to

wheel right and attack the enemy's left wing. He subsequently ordered another mounted division to wheel left and pursue de Humières' cavalry through the marshes along the Danube.

A Hessian squadron found Tallard near the Danube and took him to Marlborough. Upwards of 3,000 French cavalymen died trying to swim the river.

With Tallard's cavalry driven from the field, Marlborough's infantry was able to complete the encirclement of Clérambault's beleaguered garrison inside Blenheim. To compel the pocket of French infantry to surrender, Blood turned his guns on the village. When the losses were tallied, the French had suffered 20,000 killed and wounded and 14,000 men captured. As for the allies, they lost 6,000 killed and 8,000 wounded. In the wake of the battle, as many as half of the survivors of the Franco-Bavarian army deserted.

What was left of the once impressive Franco-Bavarian army was not enough to threaten Vienna. Marlborough had won a brilliant victory that would be remembered as one of the most decisive battles of modern history.

**Right:** This memorial to the battle is located in Lutzen, Germany. It stands at the view point the French convoy would have occupied

**Above:** A French trooper fires his carbine at a British trooper during a cavalry mêlée at Blenheim

SPANISCHER  
ERBFOLGKRIEG  
SCHLACHT AM  
13. AUGUST 1704  
AUSSICHTSPLATZ  
FÜR DEN BEGLEITROSS  
DER FRANZOSEN



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WAR**

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# BOEING B-52 STRATOFORTRESS

WORDS TOM GARNER

This iconic symbol of American air power is one of the oldest military aircraft in service today, and still a potent force to be reckoned with

**T**he B-52 Stratofortress defines the era for which it was created: the Cold War. At a time when nuclear war threatened to destroy humanity, this aircraft acted as both the enabler of apocalyptic destruction and its deterrent. It is the ultimate heavy bomber, designed for sorties from a maximum height of 50,000 feet, primarily with nuclear weapons.

The craft has a total global reach, as it can be refuelled in midair, but what is most surprising is its age and flexibility. Although it is still one of the most feared weapons in the USA's arsenal, the first prototypes were ordered as far back as 1948, in the wake of WWII, with the first plane taking to the skies in April 1952.

The key to the B-52's success is its relative simplicity. Despite a huge airframe, it is not made from complex materials like carbon fibre, and as such it can adapt to many different modifications and parts can be easily repaired or replaced. The specific aircraft featured here was ordered in 1956 and first flew in 1957, becoming the 689th B-52 to enter service. It now resides in the American Air Museum as part of the Imperial War Museum Duxford.

Over 700 of the planes have been built and any B-52s that are in service today were built in the early 1960s. Engineering analyses have shown that the B-52's operational lifespan could extend beyond 2040, an extraordinary achievement for an aircraft design that predates the Korean War.

**“ALTHOUGH IT IS STILL ONE OF THE MOST FEARED WEAPONS IN THE USA'S ARSENAL, THE FIRST PROTOTYPES WERE ORDERED AS FAR BACK AS 1948, IN THE WAKE OF WWII, WITH THE FIRST PLANE TAKING TO THE SKIES IN APRIL 1952”**



## BOEING B-52 STRATOFORTRESS

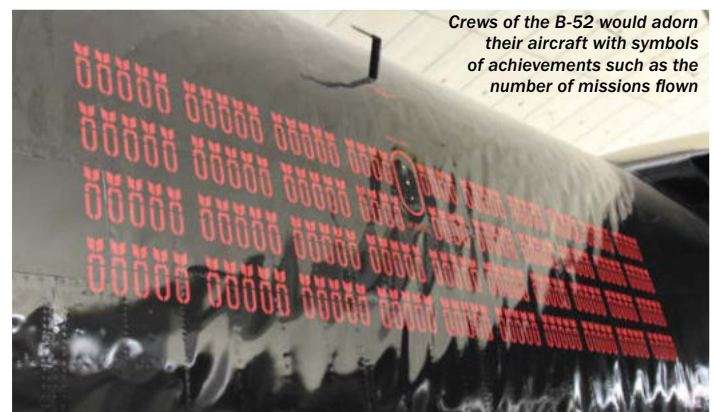
**POWER PLANT:** 8 PRATT & WITNEY ENGINES TF33-P-3/103 TURBOFAN  
**THRUST:** EACH ENGINE UP TO 17,000 LBS  
**WINGSPAN:** 56.4 M (185 FT)  
**WEIGHT:** APPROX 83,250 KG (185,000 LBS)  
**FUEL CAPACITY:** 14,1610 KG (312,197 LBS)  
**SPEED:** 650 MPH (MACH 0.86)  
**RANGE:** 8,800 MI (7,652 NAUTICAL MILES)  
**CEILING:** 15,150 M (50,000 FT)  
**CREW:** 5 (COMMANDER, PILOT, RADAR NAVIGATOR, NAVIGATOR, ELECTRONIC WARFARE OFFICER)  
**ARMAMENT:** APPROX 31,500 KG (70,000 LBS) MIXED ORDNANCE: BOMBS, SMART WEAPONS, MINES AND MISSILES. MODIFIED TO CARRY AIR-LAUNCHED CRUISE MISSILES AND MINIATURE AIR LAUNCHED DECOY

**“ENGINEERING ANALYSES HAVE SHOWN THAT THE B-52’S OPERATIONAL LIFESPAN COULD EXTEND BEYOND 2040, AN EXTRAORDINARY ACHIEVEMENT FOR AN AIRCRAFT DESIGN THAT PREDATES THE KOREAN WAR”**

*The B-52 is still an active part of the US nuclear triad along with submarines and ballistic missiles*



**Left:** A B-52H refuels over Afghanistan. Airborne refuelling gives the B-52 an almost limitless global reach. It will only land if there are oil or engine problems



*Crews of the B-52 would adorn their aircraft with symbols of achievements such as the number of missions flown*



## ARMAMENT

B-52s were originally designed to exclusively carry nuclear bombs, which was seen as the primary role. However, the plane can also carry 12 Advanced Cruise Missiles, 20 Air Launched Cruise Missiles or 8 standard nuclear bombs. It was not until the F Model that a modification was made to carry additional weapons. A 'Big Belly' modification can pack in a 500-pound bomb along with additional explosives on the wings totalling a weight of 60,000 pounds. This figure needs to be tripled as B-52s always travel in groups of three, usually flying at 40,000 feet to avoid detection.

**“THE PLANE IS CAPABLE OF CARRYING 12 ADVANCED CRUISE MISSILES, 20 AIR LAUNCHED CRUISE MISSILES OR 8 STANDARD NUCLEAR BOMBS”**



Nuclear destruction was available literally at the flick of a button in the B-52

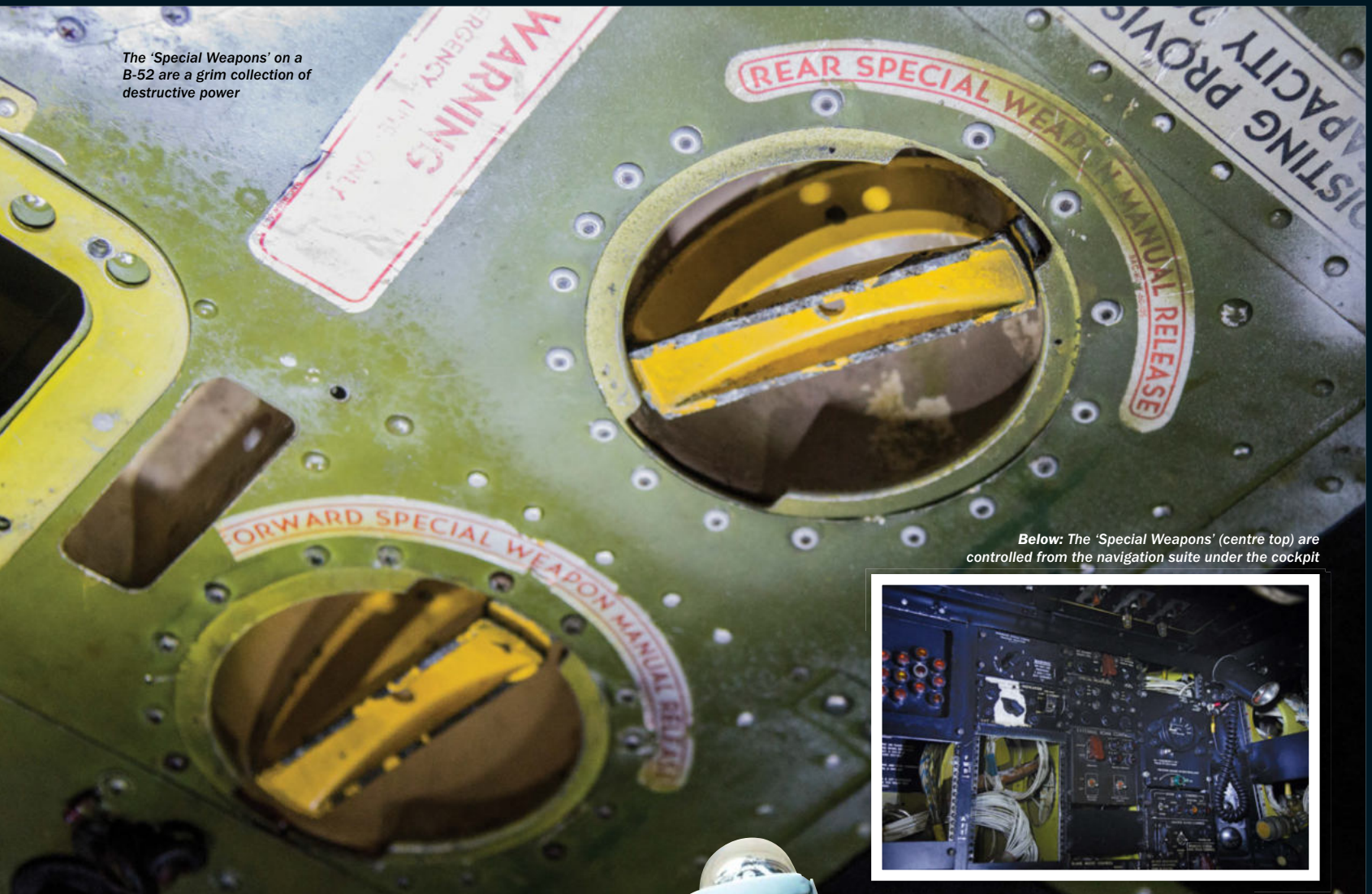
Below: An AGM-129 ACM. It was the US Air Force's most advanced air-launched nuclear missile until it was decommissioned in 2012

A B-52H displaying the variety of weapons it is capable of carrying, from cluster bombs to harpoons





The 'Special Weapons' on a B-52 are a grim collection of destructive power



Below: The 'Special Weapons' (centre top) are controlled from the navigation suite under the cockpit



## SPECIAL WEAPONS

In addition to a capacity for carrying nuclear weapons, a current 'H' Model B-52 is also capable of carrying a myriad of other explosives. Its arsenal can include 51 unguided bombs, 42 cluster bombs, ten laser-guided bombs, 51 mines and even eight guided harpoons to be used against ships. Perhaps most notoriously, B-52s dropped napalm bombs and incendiaries as a defoliant during the Vietnam War. A single bomb could destroy areas up to 2,500 square yards and the bombers were largely responsible for dropping eight million tonnes of napalm over Vietnam between 1965-73.

Napalm bombs explode on Vietcong structures. Many B-52s were involved in dropping millions of tonnes of napalm during the Vietnam War



A periscope above the Browning .50 machine guns assisted the rear gunner



## REAR GUNNER

Up until the First Gulf War, every B-52 was manned by a rear gunner who remotely operated four rear-facing Browning .50 machine guns or a M61 Vulcan cannon. The gunner was capable of seeing a considerable distance with the use of a periscope. It was a tough, lonely job, as the aircraft could be airborne for over 24 hours. Unlike his colleagues in the front of the plane, there was no place for the gunner to lie down and sleep. The only way the other crew members could communicate with the gunner was via an interphone. The turbulence could be so bad in the rear, that gunners often suffered from concussion.

**"IT WAS A TOUGH, LONELY JOB, AS THE AIRCRAFT COULD BE AIRBORNE FOR OVER 24 HOURS"**



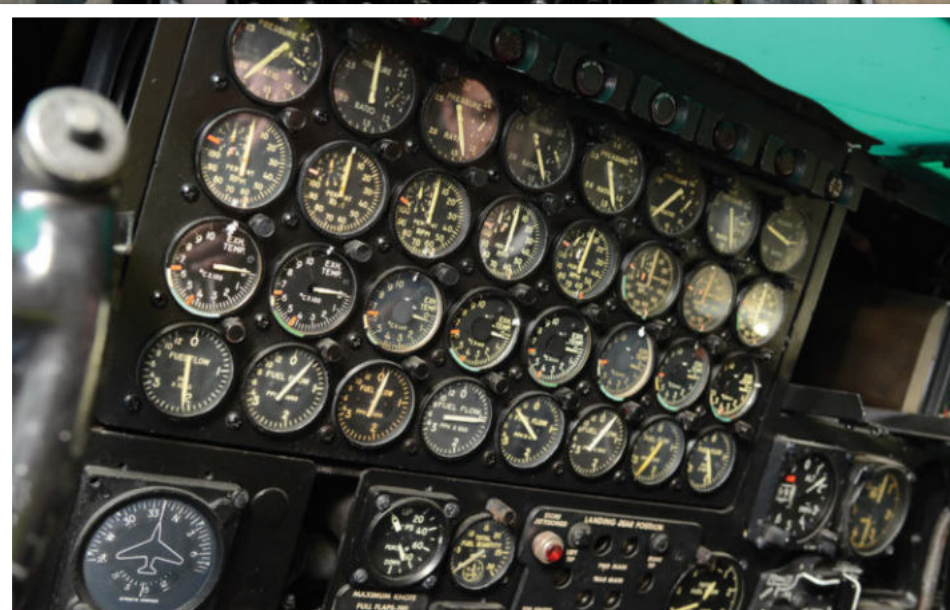


The instrumental panel of the B-52 has changed little since the 1950s

## COCKPIT

This cockpit dates from 1957 but modern B-52s look almost the same. The only difference between then and now is the use of infrared cameras and low-light televisions. The instrument panel works from the top down. At the top are readings of oil pressure for each engine. In the centre are dials for measuring the percentage of the plane's revolutions per minute (rpm) – a B-52 operates at an average of 160,000 rpm. Below this is the exhaust gas temperature, a thermal coupling that measures how hot the air in the plane's rear is. Finally, at the bottom are the readings for fuel flow, which in a B-52 can measure 1,500 pounds per hour.

**Right:** Dials include readings for pressure, speed, fuel flow, altitude and bearings







A B-52H taking off. To give the engines enough thrust the aircraft needs a runway that is at least 10,000 feet long

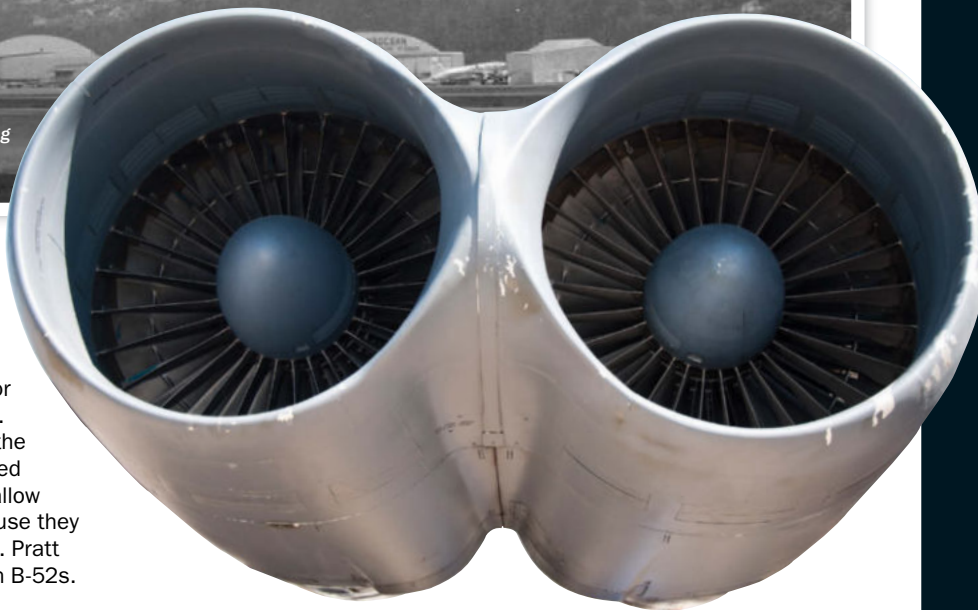


**“SOME MECHANICS WOULD ONLY ALLOW THREE FORD ENGINES PER AIRCRAFT BECAUSE THEY HAD A REPUTATION FOR BEING UNRELIABLE”**

Right: B-52s have eight engines, providing 136,000 lbs of thrust to get 450,000 lbs of aircraft off the ground

## POWERPLANT

B-52s were produced on a wartime footing and sometimes employed unconventional contractors to build the engines. For instance, Ford Motor Company made this plane's engines. Ford produced numerous plants for the B-52 but many in the Air Force disliked them. Some mechanics would only allow three Ford engines per aircraft because they had a reputation for being unreliable. Pratt & Whitney engines now power modern B-52s.



## AMERICAN AIR MUSEUM RESTORATION PROJECT DUXFORD

**THE IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM DUXFORD HAS UNDERTAKEN A MAJOR RESTORATION PROJECT TO PRESERVE OVER A CENTURY'S WORTH OF AMERICAN MILITARY AIRCRAFT. SECTION HEAD, CHRIS KNAPP TELLS US MORE**

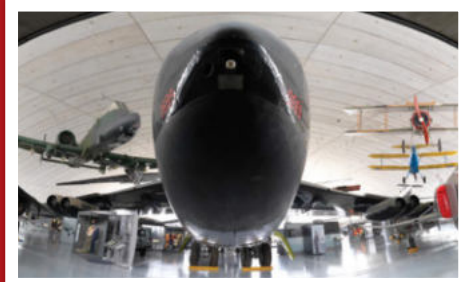
“The driving force for the project initially was that a lot of these aircraft had been suspended for 17 years and whilst we can inspect the suspensions manually, which we do, we cannot open up the aircraft to inspect the airframe itself. It's still a mechanical object, even though it's a museum piece, and some of them are over 100 years old so we had to get them all down to inspect them. We couldn't find any information anywhere of other museums that had taken aircraft down and inspected them.

“My colleagues in Exhibitions and Displays said that they would re-configure the whole setup and redo everything with new displays. The glass wall had to come down and we had five weeks to get everything out, three months to inspect everything and then five weeks to get it back in. The F-111 and the A-10 were in the original paint that they flew in when they arrived here so we would do a lot to preserve that. The B-52 stood

outside for a long time when it first came. The paint had deteriorated so we had to remove it, do some repairs to the corrosion and repaint it. We're careful on whatever we're working with.

“Every project has to stand or fall on its own merit but our primary aim is to preserve the history as much as possible. An object soaks up history; if you handle it you will lose history, the more you handle it the more history you lose. We're in the business of preserving history. A highlight is definitely the B-52. I can tell you the theory of flight but it still amazes me that it gets in the air. In the museum as a whole I have a soft spot for the Westland Wessex and the Sea King because I worked on both of those in service.”

**“WE'RE IN THE BUSINESS OF PRESERVING HISTORY”**



The B-52 forms the centrepiece of the museum



IWM Duxford has a wide array of American military aircraft



# BATTLEFIELD DUBLIN

## THE EASTER RISING 1916

At the height of World War I, Irish rebels took over large parts of Dublin in a bloody attempt to secure independence from Britain

WORDS TOM GARNER

**O**n the morning of Easter Monday, 24 April 1916, Dubliners awoke to find their city was at war. Rebels had taken over key positions in the city and proclaimed an Irish Republic. For many people this sudden rebellion was unexpected. Ireland had been an integral part of the United Kingdom since 1801, and Dublin had been the nerve centre of indirect British rule for centuries beforehand. It was sometimes proclaimed as the 'Second City of the Empire' and hundreds of thousands of Irish soldiers had volunteered to fight for the British Army during what was seen as the real war in 1916: World War I. However, over the following week Dublin would endure death and destruction close to home, and in its aftermath Ireland would never be the same again.

The Easter Rising of 1916 has long been held as the pivotal moment in modern Irish history. The event reawakened widespread

nationalist sentiment and laid the foundations for the emergence of the modern Republic of Ireland. However, at the time there was nothing to suggest that the Rising would influence later events. Indeed, from a military perspective, the rebellion was a complete failure. The story of the Rising is a litany of incompetence, strategic naivety and a mixture of heroism and brutality on both sides. For a brief moment, Dublin was just as dangerous a place to be as the Western Front, with tragic consequences for soldiers, rebels and civilians alike.

### **"England's difficulty is Ireland's opportunity"**

The Rising was the result of the complex political situation in Ireland before 1914. For decades there had been calls for Irish 'Home Rule', whereby Ireland could govern its own affairs within the British Empire, effectively an

early form of devolution. Home Rule was even put onto the statute books in 1914 but its implementation was delayed until the end of World War I.

For hard-line Irish nationalists, such as the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB), this was unacceptable and they secretly plotted to organise a national insurrection to overthrow British rule, with German help.

Their maxim was: "England's difficulty is Ireland's opportunity". Seven members of the IRB in a 'Military Council' planned the Rising: Patrick Pearse, James Connolly, Tom Clarke, Sean McDermott, Thomas McDonagh, Joseph Plunkett and Éamonn Ceannt. These men were either old Fenians or members of two fringe groups of the nationalist movement; the predominately Catholic Irish Volunteers and the socialist Irish Citizen Army. It would be the Volunteers and Citizen Army who would carry

**"OVER THE FOLLOWING WEEK DUBLIN WOULD ENDURE DEATH AND DESTRUCTION CLOSE TO HOME, AND IN ITS AFTERMATH IRELAND WOULD NEVER BE THE SAME AGAIN"**

*Irish rebels positioned on rooftops. British troops had to contend with invisible sniper fire all across the city from outposts like this*





*Above: Dubliners survey the devastation of a car wreck. Civilian deaths made up over half of the fatalities that occurred during the Easter Rising*



*Men surveying the wreckage of Linenhall Barracks after the Rising. The rebellion took the British authorities completely by surprise*





out the uprising and it was intended to be a nationwide rebellion.

The ringleaders had arranged to receive a large shipment of arms from the Germans on Good Friday, 21 April 1916, but the Royal Navy captured the cargo. The Volunteers at large did not know the IRB plans, including prominent leaders such as Eoin MacNeill. After the German shipment was lost, MacNeill was told about the plans at the last minute and he tried to call off the rebellion. However, in reality, the Military Council delayed the uprising by one day, from Easter Sunday to Easter Monday. The delay meant that the rebellion would be mostly confined to Dublin.

On 24 April the rebels, numbering approximately 1,250 men and women, seized buildings in the city centre. Some of the positions they occupied included the Four Courts, South Dublin Union, Boland's Mill, Stephen's Green, Jacob's Biscuit Factory and most importantly: the General Post Office. The 'GPO' was a prominent building, centrally located on Dublin's main thoroughfare Sackville Street (now O'Connell Street). It was here that the rebels made their headquarters.

One excited Volunteer exclaimed to the bewildered Post Office staff as the rebels flooded in, "This ain't no half-arsed revolution, this is the business." Two flags were raised over the GPO: a green flag inscribed with the words 'Irish Republic' and an unfamiliar tricolour of green, white and orange. The building was filled with uniformed Volunteers, boxes of ammunition, weapons and a medley of supplies including pikes. At 12.45pm Pearse formally proclaimed an Irish Republic beneath

**"THIS AIN'T NO  
HALF-ARSED REVOLUTION,  
THIS IS THE BUSINESS"**

**Right: Patrick Pearse officially started the Easter Rising by reading out a proclamation of Irish independence outside the GPO. The rebels displayed copies all over Dublin**

the porch of the GPO. The activity around Sackville Street became a curiously public event with over 1,000 sightseers watching it unfold. The rebels would remain in the building for the next five days.

Elsewhere in the city, a small group of 30 Citizen Army members under Séan Connolly attacked Dublin Castle, which was the centre of the British administration in Ireland. It was garrisoned by only a few soldiers and was being used as a Red Cross hospital for wounded servicemen. The rebels succeeded in taking the guardroom but failed to take control of the castle as they were poorly armed. One of the rebels left a pike behind, a traditional symbol of Irish revolt. If the castle had been taken, the rebels would have had a significant base that could have been more easily defended than their other positions. As it was, they were forced to retreat and were eventually besieged by 200 British soldiers in the nearby City Hall. Connolly was killed and his troops surrendered on 25 April.

## South Dublin Union

Most narratives concerning the Rising focus on the GPO, but the fiercest fighting took place elsewhere in Dublin, particularly at the South Dublin Union, Mount Bridge Street and North King Street.

The South Dublin Union (SDU) was a 50-acre site comprising of workhouses and hospitals for the impoverished and infirm. It was a vital public service as 90 per cent of Dublin's working class could expect to end their days destitute. It was taken over by approximately 120-150 Volunteers led by Éamonn Ceannt, without warning, on Easter Monday. Their aim was to secure southwest Dublin and head off British attacks from the nearby barracks. Men were stationed at both Roe's and Jameson's



Distillery. 65 rebels then followed Ceannt into the SDU itself. The complex was so vast that the rebels could only hold a handful of buildings, with the Nurses' Home becoming their headquarters. There were initial clashes with civilians at Roe's Distillery. Volunteers had to defend themselves with rifle butts against the angry wives of British Army soldiers.

British soldiers (largely Irishmen from the Royal Irish Regiment) launched a counterattack from Richmond Barracks. As they approached the James Street entrance of the SDU they were hit by Volunteer volley fire. Close-quarter, and sometimes hand-to-hand, fighting ensued around the hospitals and dormitories. A

## ■ FEMALE REBELS OF THE RISING

**WOMEN WERE A VISIBLE PRESENCE IN THE REBELLION, WITH MANY BECOMING ACTIVE FIGHTERS, HELPING TO TURN THE RISING INTO A STRIKINGLY MODERN EVENT**

Around 200 women took part in the Rising, some were members of the Irish Citizen Army but the majority belonged to the women's paramilitary organisation, Cumann na mBan (The Irishwomen's Council).

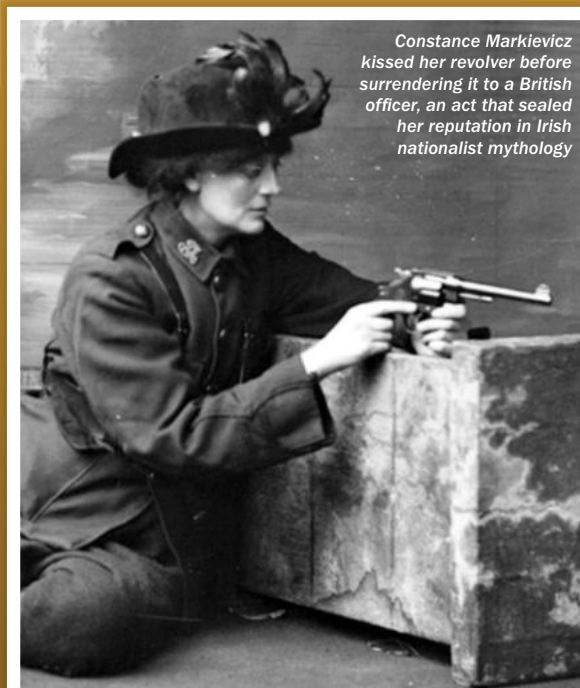
Formed in Dublin, it became an auxiliary unit of the Irish Volunteers in 1916. Its constitution advocated the cause of Irish liberty and organised Irishwomen to assist the arming and equipping of the Volunteers. Many of their male comrades were reluctant to allow females to fight. In the Four Courts, the women were reduced to menial tasks of making tea and sandwiches.

During the Rising, the women's role was largely logistical. They risked their lives as despatch carriers and braved military cordons and sniper fire to maintain communications between rebel garrisons. They also carried weapons, ammunition and

other supplies. They could be found training in first aid, signalling and rifle practice.

Despite these restrictions, women refused to see themselves as subordinate to men. In defeat, Rose McNamara refused to evade arrest and surrendered herself and 21 other women at the Marrowbone Lane Distillery. They proudly marched away four deep in uniform alongside the men.

The most famous female fighter was Constance Markievicz, an aristocrat who was a member of the Irish Citizen Army. She was second-in-command at the College of Surgeons outpost and allegedly shot a policeman. After the surrender she was condemned to death and was only spared because of her gender. She remained defiant and declared to the British about her role, "I did what I thought was right, and I stand by it".



Constance Markievicz kissed her revolver before surrendering it to a British officer, an act that sealed her reputation in Irish nationalist mythology



# THE COMPLEX SHADOW OF 1916

DR FEARGHAL MCGARRY OF QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY BELFAST DISCUSSES THE DIVISIVE AFTERMATH AND LEGACY OF THE EASTER RISING



## WHAT WAS THE EXTENT OF GERMAN INVOLVEMENT IN THE RISING AND WHAT DID THEY HOPE TO GAIN FROM IT?

The rebels weren't as successful as they would have liked to be in getting German

support. They were hoping for a German landing not just with arms, [but also] military leadership and troops. I don't think that was feasible because of the lack of German control of the seas. All they got was the promise of weapons. From the German point of view they saw this as the ability to cause a lot of trouble at a minimum cost to them so I don't think they took it seriously as a military venture.

## WHAT IMPACT DID THE EXECUTION OF THE LEADING REBELS HAVE ON THE IRISH PUBLIC OPINION?

It had a huge impact. 15 people isn't a large number, considering the scale of the Rising, but the fact that they are shot in groups of two or three people spaced out for almost two weeks dominates the agenda and there's a rising anger. From the British perspective shooting these people seems like the least that can be done in response to a rising of this nature in a time of war with Britain's back to the wall. It's difficult to see any of the other powers acting differently. In terms of nationalist public opinion, what they see is double standards. Nationalists feel that the rebels fought fairly, cleanly, bravely, even with chivalry and that therefore they'd won the right to be treated as prisoners of war.

The arrests are also important. The British arrest over 3,000 people, which is larger than the number of people that took part in the Rising and they intern 2,000 people.

When you think about all the numbers of family and friends that are involved that's where the arrests cause a much more deep-rooted amnesty campaign, to get the prisoners out. That leads directly to more popular support for republicanism.

## WHAT DID MICHAEL COLLINS LEARN FROM THE RISING WHEN HE HELPED TO CONDUCT THE SUBSEQUENT IRISH WAR OF INDEPENDENCE IN 1919?

The whole point of the Rising for people like Patrick Pearse was to have a kind of symbolic gesture. A lot of people didn't agree with that. Collins falls into the pragmatists and describes the Easter Rising as a Greek tragedy. He said, "It didn't seem like a good time to be making speeches." For Collins the lesson was: if you're going to have a military campaign it should be efficient and effective. The type of violence that Collins spearheaded in 1919 is very different. It's not about self-sacrifice, it's about using violence as effectively as possible, using the strength that you have in terms of guerrilla warfare with the least possible cost in terms of the dangers you expose your own men to.

## WHAT DID IRISH SOLDIERS FIGHTING IN THE BRITISH ARMY THINK OF THE RISING?

A significant number of the British Army casualties were Irish, somewhere around a quarter. They thought a range of things. Some of the Irish soldiers

see the rebels as betraying them and stabbing them in the back.

On the other hand, you have a lot of interesting ambivalence with Irish soldiers saying, "We're fighting for freedom too, why don't you join us and fight for freedom on the Western Front?" And even more striking examples of, "Why didn't you wait until the war was over and we would have joined in with you?" Many Irish nationalists in the British Army broadly shared the same kind of ideals as the rebels. So there's a wide range of different responses.

For a lot of soldiers on the Western Front it seems like a betrayal, and Germans are taunting them about what's happening in Dublin. In a sense they become victims of the Easter Rising. By the time they come home to Ireland in 1918-19, they're seen as being on the wrong side and are reviled in some quarters. The numbers are staggering. 2,000 people at most fought in the rebellion whereas over 200,000 fought in World War I but by 1919 they're coming home to a place that's transformed in terms of public opinion. What does become very difficult is for returning British Army soldiers who are nationalists to be proud of what they did in WWI.

## AFTER 100 YEARS, TO WHAT EXTENT IS THE EASTER RISING STILL RELEVANT TO IRISH POLITICS AND NATIONAL IDENTITY?

The Easter Rising has a higher profile in the Republic of Ireland than it has done for several decades.

There was a lot of embarrassment about 1916 in the context of the Troubles. It was easy for the Provisional IRA to claim a kind of legitimacy from 1916 and say, "We're fighting for broadly the same objectives. We don't necessarily have a democratic mandate but neither did the people in 1916." So there was embarrassment and uneasiness at certain periods. In 1976, for example, the 60th anniversary is very low key.

It really starts in 2006 when the military parade in Dublin, which was suspended in the early stages of the Troubles, is brought back with an enthusiastic, greener remembrance of 1916 because it doesn't have those troublesome connotations.

How Irish people view the Rising is very much influenced by the border. In Northern Ireland there is still sensitivity, even now, around the Troubles. It just isn't something that can bring people together both nationalists and unionists. I've noticed that the British government has signed on to the Irish government's idea of a 'decade of centenaries'. There's a willingness to use the commemoration to shore up the very positive developments in the peace process. The Irish government are going to have an official ceremony to commemorate the British Army dead in Grangegorman Military Cemetery, so there's a lot more inclusivity and sensitivity about remembering all sides. Whereas in previous ceremonies, the state would only remember and recognise the republicans.



The future Irish revolutionary icon, Michael Collins, is pictured here in his Volunteers uniform shortly before the Rising



number of patients and nurses were killed and the Volunteers had to abandon most of their positions and retreat to the Nurses' Home, which was a strong three-storey building. The British lost six dead and more were wounded. This distressed soldiers who were supposed to be convalescing from the Western Front.

The British, now under the overall command of General William Lowe, bypassed the SDU for the next two days while they cleared out the nearby Mendicity Institute and secured communication lines into the city centre. On Thursday 27 April, they brought up reinforcements from the Sherwood Foresters and armed policemen, and attacked the SDU. When they attacked the Nurses' Home the combat was harrowing. The British blew a hole in the wall but then there was room-to-room fighting, with handguns and grenades, which lasted for most of the day. One Volunteer

### **"THE BRITISH LOST SIX DEAD AND MORE WERE WOUNDED. THIS DISTRESSED SOLDIERS WHO WERE SUPPOSED TO BE CONVALESCING FROM THE WESTERN FRONT"**

kicked a bomb back towards the British before it exploded.

In a separate incident, Ceantt shot a policeman at point-blank range when he tried to get through a door. At 8pm the British called off the assault. They had lost 20 dead and double that number in wounded while the Volunteers lost seven dead. Four civilians also died within the SDU. The Thursday fighting had been ferocious but the Volunteers held the Nurses' Home until Sunday 30 April. They had been convinced they were winning and only surrendered when they heard of Pearse's capitulation at the GPO.

#### **Mount Street Bridge**

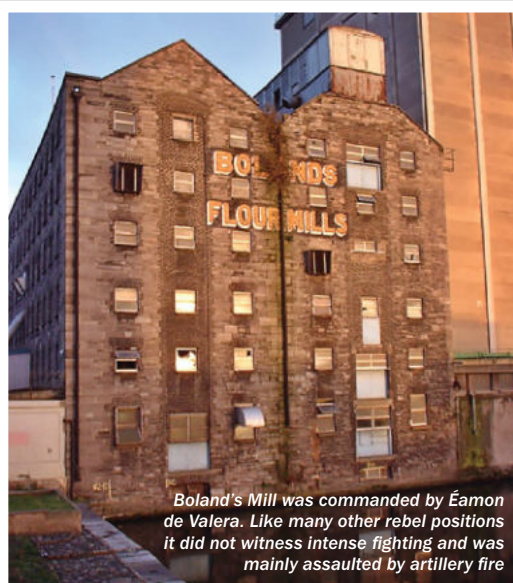
Throughout Dublin the British were drawn into street fighting with concealed snipers and close-range crossfires. This negated their superiority in men and firepower and

the heaviest clashes occurred at strategic Volunteer positions that overlooked routes into the city, such as Mount Street. This road was the approach into the city centre from the port of Kingstown (now Dun Laoghaire), and contained a Volunteer outpost of just 17 men armed with rifles and handguns under the command of a 28-year-old carpenter called Mick Malone.

On Easter Monday, they killed four reservist soldiers on Mount Street and could have proceeded to take the nearby Beggars Bush Barracks, which was only held by army catering staff and 17 rifles. Instead, Malone positioned his men in Clanwilliam House, which overlooked the crossing over a canal and two houses on the other bank in Northumberland Road. On 26 April, the Sherwood Foresters attacked them.

The Foresters had just arrived from England and were dangerously inexperienced in combat, having only learnt to load and fire their weapons on Kingstown Pier that morning. They also left their Lewis machine guns behind. Crowds on the way to Northumberland Road cheered them but they then stumbled across fire from Malone's men. General Lowe ordered for the bridge at Mount Street to be taken "at all costs" and waves of soldiers, led by officers with drawn swords, charged up the road only to be shot down. By evening the road was strewn with British casualties.

Four officers and 24 other ranks were killed, and over 200 were badly wounded, accounting



*Boland's Mill was commanded by Éamon de Valera. Like many other rebel positions it did not witness intense fighting and was mainly assaulted by artillery fire*

*The remains of the Dublin Bread Company on Sackville Street after the Rising. Many businesses were destroyed during the fighting*





# WAR ON THE STREETS

THE EASTER RISING TOOK PLACE ALL OVER THE CENTRE OF DUBLIN, WITH STREET FIGHTING ENGULFING THE IRISH CAPITAL IN A BLAZE OF DESTRUCTION

The rebels intended to hold key parts of Dublin's infrastructure in order to grind the city to a halt and encourage a more widespread national uprising. However, they often failed to

take advantage of poorly-manned British barracks and found themselves besieged in a variety of positions across the city centre by the British Army. Rebel outposts were an eclectic mix of

public and private buildings with strongholds, including a post office, hospitals, suburban houses, civic halls, distilleries and even a biscuit factory.

## 1 24 APRIL: REBELS TAKE OVER THE GPO

On Easter Monday, Irish rebels storm into the General Post Office on Sackville Street and make it their headquarters, raising two revolutionary flags on its roof. At 12.45pm, Patrick Pearse proclaims an Irish Republic to surprised onlookers. The rebellion has begun.

## 2 24 APRIL: ATTEMPTED ASSAULT ON DUBLIN CASTLE

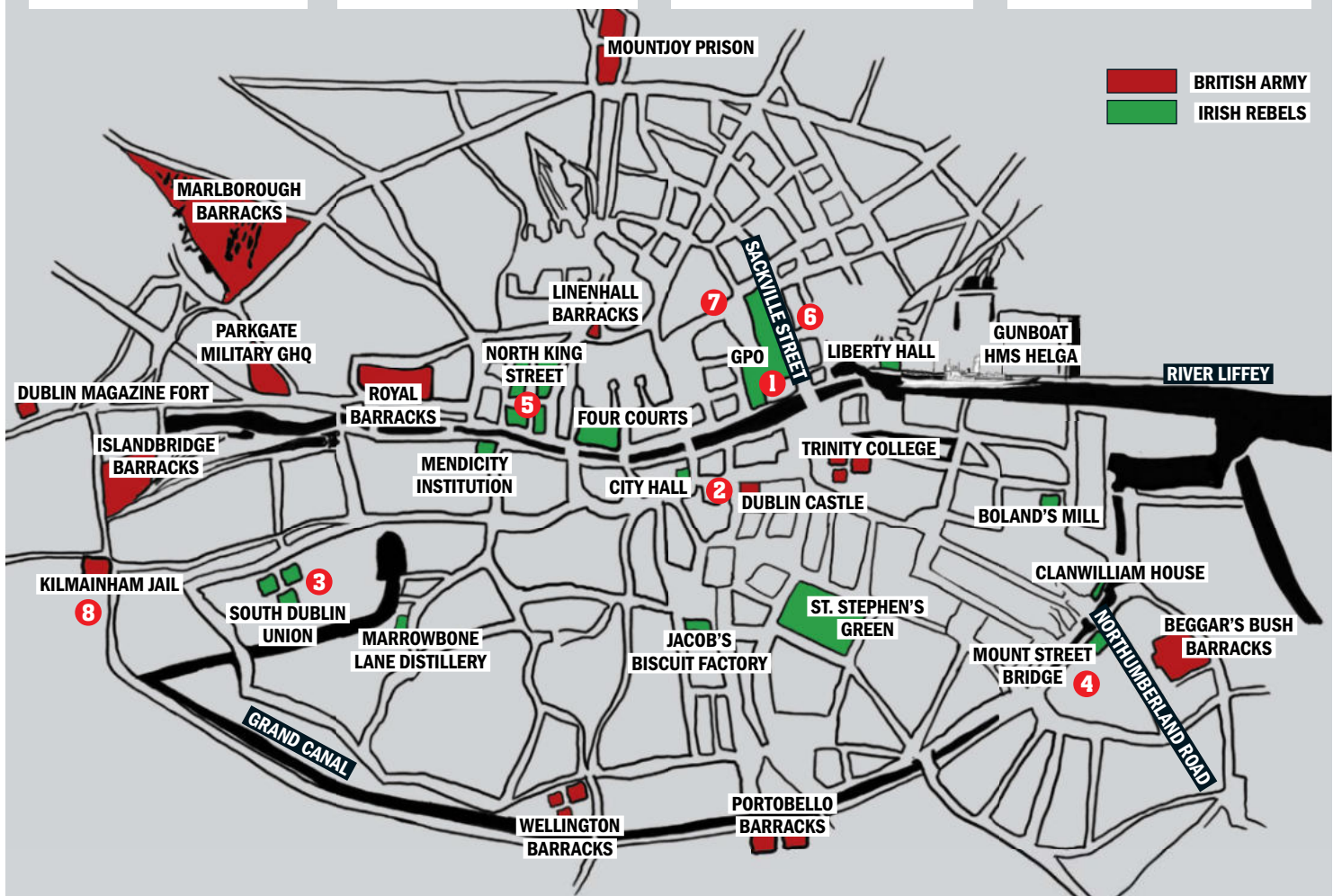
One of the first attacks of the Rising is an attack on centre of British rule in Ireland: Dublin Castle. Séan Connolly leads 30 members of the Irish Citizen Army in an attack on the castle but the attack fails and rebels are forced to retreat to the City Hall where Connolly is killed and the rest surrender.

## 3 24-30 APRIL: THE SOUTH DUBLIN UNION

Éamonn Ceannt leads 120-150 Irish Volunteers to take over the South Dublin Union, a vast complex of hospitals and workhouses. The British make several attempts to retake the SDU but they meet fierce resistance from the Volunteers, most notably in the Nurses' Home. The Volunteers do not surrender until Sunday 30 April.

## 4 26 APRIL: MOUNT STREET BRIDGE

17 Volunteers, led by Mick Malone, hide in houses overlooking the canal on Mount Street and Northumberland. They mow down continuous waves of attacks by the Sherwood Foresters inflicting 240 British casualties. The rebels eventually slip away when the British start using artillery and machine guns.



## 5 28 APRIL: NORTH KING STREET

British soldiers come under continuous sniper fire in the North King Street area. They lose over 40 casualties while only advancing 150 yards in two days. They eventually break through using an improvised armoured car but 15 civilian men are killed when the soldiers mistake them for rebels.

## 6 26-28 APRIL: SIEGE OF SACKVILLE STREET

Towards the end of Easter week, the British start to surround the area around Sackville Street, inflicting intense artillery and machine-gun fire on the GPO. Sackville Street becomes a blazing firestorm and the GPO is eventually set alight. The rebels' position becomes indefensible and they leave the GPO hoping to escape into nearby houses.

## 7 29 APRIL: THE REBELS SURRENDER

Now trapped on all sides by the British Army, Patrick Pearse officially surrenders to General William Lowe on Moore Street at 3.30pm on Saturday 29 April. The Irish Republic has fallen just days after its proclamation.

## 8 30 APRIL: THE MARCH INTO CAPTIVITY

The final rebel outposts surrender on Sunday 30 April and the prisoners are escorted away to the jeers of angry Dubliners. Most of the rebel ringleaders are executed in Kilmainham Gaol in the following days and 1,480 rebels are interned in English or Welsh prisons.



for two thirds of British casualties during the Rising. One witness described the aftermath: "They lay all over Northumberland Road... the place was literally swimming in blood."

Mount Street Bridge showed the rebels how much damage they could have inflicted on the British with small, well-sited outposts. Cooping up hundreds of fighters in large buildings was counterproductive. For example, Malone was only two streets away from Boland's Mill, which was garrisoned with over 100 Volunteers commanded by the future Irish president, Éamon de Valera. De Valera never attempted to reinforce Malone and Boland's Mill itself saw little action. On 27 April, the British stormed Malone's positions after they brought up machine guns and explosives. Four Volunteers, including Malone, were killed while the rest slipped away.

### North King Street

The British also had difficulties around North King Street, straddling the route to the GPO on the north bank of the River Liffey. The area contained a series of little streets and tenements, where Volunteers, commanded by Ned Daly, set up a network of barricades, making the area hotly contested. The British could make little progress in taking the area.

## "TRAGICALLY, IT WOULD BE CIVILIANS WHO SUFFERED MOST DURING THE RISING, MAKING UP MORE THAN HALF OF THE FATALITIES"

By Friday 28 April, the South Staffordshire Regiment had only advanced 150 yards down North King Street in two days. They lost 14 dead, and a further 32 were wounded, to Mauser rifle fire. This were compounded by the struggle to identify rebels. General John Maxwell said, "The rebels wore no uniform and the man who had been shooting at a soldier one moment might be walking quietly beside him at another."

Eventually, an improvised armoured car arrived and the British were able to advance up the street and enter the houses. It was here that the worst atrocity against civilians occurred: 15 men were shot or bayoneted by troops who accused them of being rebels. For the British, already infuriated by the losses they had suffered, it was difficult to distinguish

rebels from civilians as many Dubliners in the area sympathised with the Volunteers.

Tragically, it would be civilians who suffered most during the Rising, making up more than half of the fatalities. Much of the blame has been placed on the British who often mistook civilians for rebels but the rebels themselves were also culpable. The rebels killed civilians, policemen and unarmed soldiers. The Citizen Army in particular – who saw themselves as socialist revolutionaries – were ruthless about shooting policemen. This was largely in revenge for their role in suppressing the 1913 Dublin Lock-out industrial dispute. It has been argued that, morally, the IRB Military Council were largely responsible for civilian deaths as they had chosen to base the Rising in a densely-populated, inner city. This decision conflicted with their ideas of fighting as a conventional military force.

### Surrender at the GPO

For the first half of the week, there was little activity at the GPO itself but morale remained high. The leaders expected an imminent national uprising and the Volunteers even published a propaganda newspaper called *Irish War News*. By mid-week, the situation became increasingly ominous as fires began to spread



British regular troops firing from a barricade of empty beer casks near the Dublin quays. Many of the 'British' soldiers were in fact Irish



Following the surrender of the rebels the GPO lay in ruins



through Sackville Street. After Mount Street was taken, the main body of British soldiers advanced towards the GPO and subjected it to intense machine gun and artillery fire. From Wednesday 26 April, Sackville Street was besieged, with a gunboat on the River Liffey, the Helga, shelling Liberty Hall and four 18-pounder field guns firing from Trinity College. Throughout the bombardment, the rebels had little direct engagement with the British and much of the fighting consisted of long-range sniper duels.

Like at North King Street, the British were fired at from many angles including windows and roofs. In the confusion, British soldiers often fired at each other. Nevertheless, time was running out for the rebels, and apart from some minor incidents in Ashbourne, Enniscorthy and Galway, the national uprising did not materialise, and in the GPO the rebels were hampered by their fighting capability. They were issued with an assortment of firearms including shotguns, revolvers and both antique and modern rifles. These all required different ammunition, which created distribution problems for them for the duration of the fighting.

There was also a growing firestorm in Sackville Street, with the GPO itself catching fire. One female rebel described the bombardment as “beyond description”. The rebels abandoned the GPO and tried to escape through nearby houses but the British Army surrounded them.

At 3.30pm on Saturday 29 April, Pearse unconditionally surrendered to General Lowe on Moore Street. The other garrisons



After the executions of the Rising's ringleaders by the British, the rebels were elevated from reviled traitors to political martyrs. This photo shows crowds waiting to welcome recently released Irish prisoners in 1917

capitulated soon afterwards. The Easter Rising was over and much of Dublin was a burning shell. The human cost was considerable. Between 450-485 people were killed and over 2,000 were wounded. Of those casualties four per cent were policemen, 16 per cent were rebels, 26 per cent British soldiers, and 54 per cent were civilians. The

high civilian cost angered Dubliners who initially berated the rebels.

From a military perspective, the Rising had completely failed. It was left to the British to turn the vilified rebels into political martyrs after they summarily executed 15 of the ringleaders – including Pearse, Connolly and Ceannt – in quick succession. In the words of WB Yeats, the people of Dublin were transformed, “changed, changed utterly: a terrible beauty is born”. The Easter Rising, despite all the military incompetence and unwarranted destruction, became the catalyst that would eventually lead to the creation of an independent Irish state.

Images: Alamy, Getty

## “AFTER MOUNT STREET WAS TAKEN, THE MAIN BODY OF BRITISH SOLDIERS ADVANCED TOWARDS THE GPO AND SUBJECTED IT TO INTENSE MACHINE GUN AND ARTILLERY FIRE”

### ■ REBELS WITH A CAUSE

#### TWO REMARKABLY DIFFERENT POLITICAL FACTIONS JOINED FORCES TO FIGHT FOR THE CAUSE OF IRISH INDEPENDENCE

Rebels came from two ideologically different political groups: the Irish Volunteers and the Irish Citizen Army. The Volunteers were formed in response to the rise of the Ulster Volunteers, a militant unionist organisation that was opposed to Home Rule and was willing to secede Protestant Ulster away from the rest of predominately Catholic southern Ireland. The Irish Volunteers' purpose was to achieve Home

Rule and arm all Irish people in order to achieve that aim, but in 1914 it split into two groups. The majority formed the 'National Volunteers' who were led by the moderate John Redmond. He had

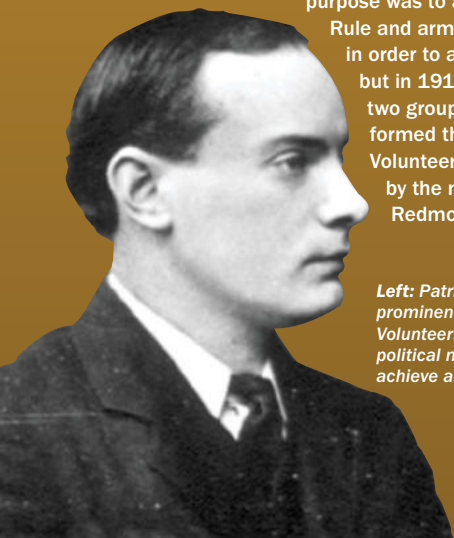
pledged his support for the British war effort and over 30,000 'Redmondite' Volunteers joined the British Army.

The remaining Volunteers, numbering 13,000, refused to help the British and 1,250 of those formed the core of Rising's rebels. The breakaway Volunteers were hard-line in their nationalism, with many rejecting Home Rule and calling for an Irish Republic along with an increased promotion of the Irish language. Patrick Pearse, in particular, became obsessed with the need for a 'blood-sacrifice' and saw the Volunteers as continuing the traditions of Irish rebellions from previous centuries. They were heavily influenced by secret members of the IRB, which included Fenians like Tom Clarke, who had been jailed for an attempted bombing campaign in the 1880s. They also inspired young men who would later become pivotal figures in the Irish War of Independence and Civil War such as Éamon de Valera and Michael Collins.

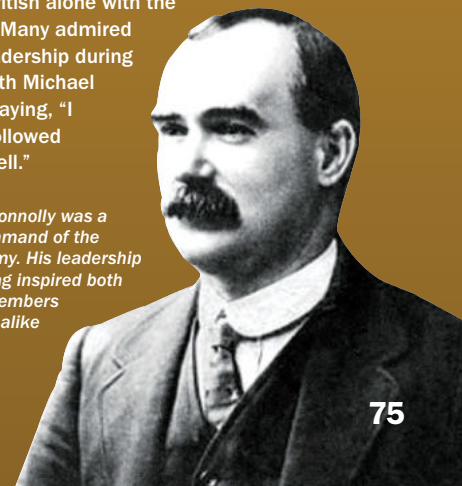
In contrast to the Volunteers' conservative nationalism, the Irish Citizen Army was rooted

in the trade union movement and was socialist in outlook. It was formed in 1913 to protect striking Dublin workers from the police. Its most prominent leader, James Connolly, was a Marxist who believed that the establishment of an Irish Republic should be combined with a revolution in class solidarity and public ownership, stating, “We are not only for political liberty, but economic liberty as well.” When the Rising was in danger of being cancelled by the Volunteers, he threatened to fight the British alone with the Citizen Army. Many admired Connolly's leadership during the Rising, with Michael Collins later saying, “I would have followed Connolly to Hell.”

Right: James Connolly was a socialist in command of the Irish Citizen Army. His leadership during the Rising inspired both Citizen Army members and Volunteers alike



Left: Patrick Pearse was a prominent leader of the Irish Volunteers and believed that political martyrdom could achieve an Irish Republic





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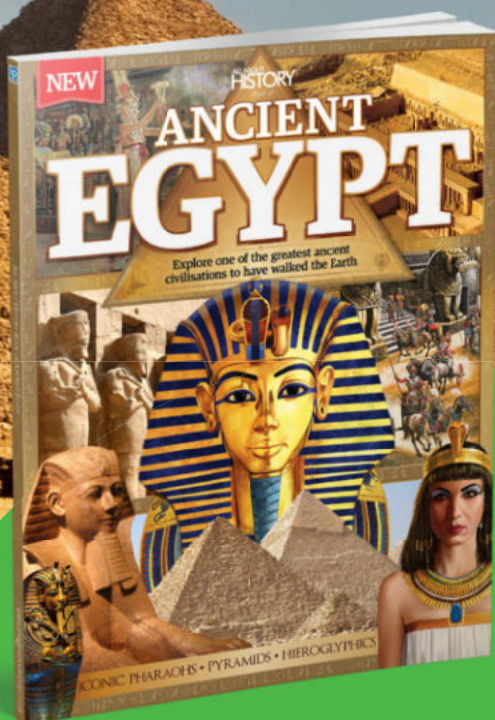


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# The rise of Kurdistan

They are a scattered population of fractious, stubborn, and heroic people without a country, so how did the Kurds become among the West's strongest allies against extremism?

WORDS MIGUEL MIRANDA

**W**hat transpired in Azaz, Syria, during the first months of 2016 was the latest twist in a convoluted war.

Five years since the beginning of Syria's current woes – where an aimless opposition backed by NATO and Gulf Arab states is trying to overthrow Bashar al-Assad – the fighting, then taking place in Eastern Syria, had little connection with whatever had transpired prior.

The Peoples' Protection Unit (YPG), a paramilitary group composed of Syrian Kurdish socialists who welcome Muslims and Christians into their ranks, was intent on seizing the border town from either a rival militia or the encroaching Islamic State. Everybody on either side of the Euphrates River calls them 'Daesh' after their acronyms in Arabic.

The crux of the ongoing battle was a vital logistical corridor connecting Turkey with Eastern Syria and Aleppo, the prosperous but embattled city contested by Bashar al-Assad's regime and its enemies. This explained the Kurds' persistence – to hold Azaz would secure a lifeline to Aleppo and cut off the sinister caliphate entrenched in Raqqa, north of the Euphrates. Another consequence, should Azaz fall, is its ability to deprive the scattered remnants of the Free Syrian Army (FSA) of their supply bases in Turkey. The greatest incentive for Kurdish control of Azaz is enabling them access to the third and last isolated canton or enclave straddling the Syria-Turkey border.

But just as Russia and the United States of America, along with their allies on the ground, agreed to a ceasefire, the YPG units attired in olive-green uniforms came under attack. From 13 until 16 February, the Turkish Army

bombarded Azaz, along with the captured Menagh airfield nearby, to check the YPG's envelopment of the town.

The deed was carried out by batteries of Firtinas, 155mm self-propelled guns and among the most advanced howitzers in the world. The bombardment, along with threats by Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu of a joint Saudi-Turkish invasion of Syria, caused vitriol to overflow on social media as Kurdish leaders accused Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdogan's government of backing Daesh.

While the accusation is outlandish, the calculus motivating Ankara's hostility towards the Kurds is cold-blooded and strategic. Almost 15 million Kurds within Turkey have been recalcitrant since the time of the Sultans, but what YPG fighters were so close to accomplishing in early 2016, was unimaginable.

If the Syrian Rojava (Federation of Northern Syria) should coalesce, like the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) in Iraq, it would be led by a grass-roots administration inspired by Turkey's ultimate public enemy: Abdullah Öcalan. A radical secessionist, Öcalan led the Kurdish Worker's Party's (PKK) war of attrition against the Turkish state from 1984-99.

As if Daesh were not enough to deal with, the possibilities of an expansionist Kurdish enclave with its own army needed to be checked, meaning a new front erupted in the maelstrom of Syria's collapse. But this minor drama of Machiavellian intrigues does inspire some reflection – why do the Kurds, a pastoral and tribal society forever consigned to second-class citizen status in Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Turkey, inhabit the nightmares of the Levant's rulers?

## A DIVIDED PEOPLE, INDIVISIBLE

1918

World War I ends and the Ottoman Empire slides headlong into collapse. Proud yet humiliated, Sultan Mehmed VI agrees to his dominion's forceful partition administered by British and French troops.

1920

The defeated Ottoman Empire's southern vilayat or province dominated by the city of Mosul is ceded to an unnamed would-be Kurdish state guaranteed by the Treaty of Sevres.

1923

Emerging victorious in the War of Liberation against occupying European forces and the Greeks, the self-styled Mustafa Kemal Pasha Atatürk repudiates Sevres and preserves Turkey in the Treaty of Lausanne.

**"WHAT YPG FIGHTERS WERE SO CLOSE TO ACCOMPLISHING IN EARLY 2016, WAS UNIMAGINABLE"**



Kurdish Peshmerga soldiers conduct urban combat training, 2015





## Sevres and the Soviets

Iranian people speaking an Indo-European language, the Kurds began migrating south of the Caucasus at least eight millennia ago. It wasn't until modern times when the germ of nationalism flowered in their consciousness.

If there's a persistent archetype of the Kurds, it's a grizzled Kalashnikov-clutching fighter in loose khaki trousers with a scarf wrapped around his head. But the reality of this gripping image is closer to stereotype and the Peshmerga (hardy mountain guerrillas of Northern Iraq) are a recent creation. Neither are they embodiments of Kurdish nationalism, a movement that has no centre of gravity, with offshoots in Turkey and Iran.

The Kurdish aspiration for a sovereign homeland is a story with three different settings, but the most remarkable is what transpired in Iran at the end of WWII. In 1941, it was decided by London and Moscow to seize Iran – which until 1935 was known as Persia – to secure its petroleum exports and an unmolested land bridge for delivering Lend-Lease to the Soviet Union.

The operation succeeded in overthrowing the elderly Reza Shah Pahlavi but endangered Iran's social cohesion. Always an imperial entity, Persia's rulers commanded domains inhabited by subject peoples. It was during the Safavid Dynasty (1501-1722), and the later Qajars, when the Kurds in the empire's northwestern reaches joined the Azeris, Armenians, and Turkmen under Persian dominion.

With the Soviet Union annexing their territory, a renaissance occurred among disaffected Kurds dreaming of an old promise – made by the League of Nations at the end of WWI – for a country spanning Eastern Anatolia and Northern Iraq. The Treaty of Sevres, signed on 10 August 1920, rubber-stamped this new republic but it was for naught. When Mustafa Kemal Atatürk led his army to victory over the Greeks and demanded new terms to preserve what would become modern Turkey – the resulting Treaty of Lausanne, signed on 24 July 1923 – negated the possibility of a Kurdish state.

The millions of Kurds within Turkey have had it hard since then. From 1925 onwards, their attempts at resisting Atatürk's power was met with brute force. Kurdish identity and culture, their language and livelihood, was suppressed.

However, the dream of Sevres was revived in Soviet-controlled Iran. For years, Moscow cultivated the Kurdish population within its borders even when their treatment was often heavy-handed. Spread among tiny pockets in Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan, these Soviet Kurds were weaned from their nomadic lifestyles and collectivised. In exchange for pastoral freedom they were given access to schools, housing, and their language was transcribed and codified.

## "IRAQI KURDISTAN'S OWN NATIONALIST FERMENT WAS KEPT IN CHECK BY SADDAM HUSSEIN'S REGIME"

Unlike Turkey, the Soviets allowed an autonomous Kurdish enclave within Azerbaijan in 1923. This experiment was repeated on a grander scale with the Republic of Mahabad, governed by revolutionaries from Iraqi Kurdistan and their like-minded peers in Iran. The triumph was short-lived, however.

In 1946, the vengeful Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi sent his troops to seize what he considered a renegade province. The Soviets didn't even lift a finger to help and the remnants of the Mahabad administration, including the staunch freedom fighter Mustafa Barzani, fled back to Iraq where he and his followers began feuding with the British client, King Faisal II, and later with the proto-dictator, President Qasim. These quarrels over autonomy and identity erupted in civil war by 1961, and the Kurds of Iraq have been trapped under Baghdad's thumb ever since.

### Those who face death

Iraqi Kurdistan's own nationalist ferment was kept in check by Saddam Hussein's regime for some 30 years. The treatment of local Kurds by Iran and Turkey was just as draconian, yet the multi-religious Iraqi Kurds and their plight are better known in the outside world.

The Peshmerga, a portmanteau of Kurdish words meaning 'Those who face death', were a leftover concept from the fallen Mahabad Republic embraced by the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) and its rival, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK). The name was then applied to militias levied from armed frontiersmen. Both factions mobilised the Peshmerga against Saddam Hussein but the gruelling Iran-Iraq War from 1980 until 1988 showed the Kurds were susceptible to becoming proxies under Iranian and Iraqi influence.

The Peshmerga were also soundly defeated by Saddam's war machine both in the late 1980s, and after Operation Desert Storm. The tragedy of corpse-strewn Kurdish villages after mustard gas attacks during the genocidal al-Anfal Campaign is a chapter of infamy. The myth of the incorrigible Peshmerga was further shredded in the 1990s when the KDP, led by Mustafa Barzani's son Massoud, and the PUK fought a civil war in Kurdistan. With both sides lacking heavy weapons, their leaders sought patronage and arms from Tehran and Baghdad.

The modern experience of Iraqi Kurds is a dismal one sown with terror and fratricide. As

Germany airlifted thousands of G36 and G3 rifles in late 2014 to arm the beleaguered Peshmerga



Kurdistan's tricolor flag traces its origins to the aborted Treaty of Sevres in 1920

### 1946

Believing in the Soviet Union's unflinching support, nationalists in Iran launch the Mahabad Republic and unfurl the tricolor of Kurdistan. Their nascent country is crushed by the Shah's troops the same year.



### 1961

The KDP led by Mustafa Barzani is forced to go underground by Iraq's paranoid monarchy. This sparks the long on-again, off-again civil war in the north that mobilizes the Peshmerga.

### 1979

After a year of violent protests radicals in the Iranian opposition movement against Reza Pahlavi's rule install the Ayatollah Khomeini and climax the Iranian Revolution. Iran's Kurdish question is ignored.

### 1980

The Iran-Iraq War begins and Saddam Hussein's forces enjoy the upper hand until they're pushed back in 1984. Both countries use Kurdish paramilitaries as proxies to foment civil unrest.

### 1984

The shadowy Kurdish nationalist group called the PKK launches a campaign of terror in Southern Turkey. Its goal is to mobilize the local population and launch a war of independence.





recently as 2013, when the PUK's founder Jalal Talabani was President of Iraq and the Shia Nouri al Maliki, an army politician, was Prime Minister. A war almost erupted between the Peshmerga and al Maliki over Kirkuk – a former Kurdish stronghold Saddam deliberately populated with Sunni Arabs.

But the spirit of defiance, and uncompromising idealism that is the hallmark of Kurdish politics, lived on in Turkey. The 1960s and 1970s were dark ages for the modern nation cobbled together by Kemal Ataturk, who entrusted the preservation of Turkey's secular values to the armed forces. Fearing the return of the mosque as a venue for public affairs and in an attempt to restore order, the Turkish military hijacked the state in 1960, 1971, and 1980. These were necessary interventions that also checked the restive minorities within its borders.

At the time, university student Abdullah Öcalan was a recent Marxism convert and wanted to uphold the progressive ideals advocated by Joseph Stalin, albeit tailored for the sensibilities of his fellow Kurds and with a touch of Maoist revolutionary zeal. Only fluent in Turkish, Öcalan's formative years were spent coming to grips with his Kurdish identity.

His newfound empowerment – as described to American journalist Daniel Pipes, who was his guest in Damascus – meant acknowledging where he came from. "I fought within myself for a long time whether to be a Turk or a Kurd," Öcalan said. "After my studies, I came to the conclusion I should consider myself a Kurd."

This rare moment of whimsical self-reflection doesn't touch on his radicalism, or how he eventually sought refuge in Syria and founded the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), a group patronised by the late Hafez al-Assad whose generosity furnished them with weapons, training, homes, and camps in Lebanon's Beqaa Valley. Öcalan's ties with the elder Assad meant he resided for many years in Damascus and other parts of Syria.

With the help of collaborators, Öcalan meticulously organised and planned a sequential campaign to liberate the Kurdish homeland trapped within Turkey's borders. The PKK's strategy was straight out of a partisan rulebook. Focusing on sabotage and infiltration, the resulting collapse of Turkish authority in Kurdish areas was the catalyst for mass mobilisation that would spread to the cities. This will, in turn, trigger a national revolution that leads to either Turkish federalism or full-blown independence.

When the PKK launched its private war against the state in 1984, the results were less than desirable. Instead of ceding control, the Turkish military and police cracked down on the Kurds. Nearly two decades of oppression followed as the Turkish army and domestic security



*A member of the People's Protection Units (YPG) poses for the camera. The YPG appoints its officers by conducting internal elections*

## 1986

With Kurdistan once again in revolt thanks to illicit Iranian support Saddam Hussein launches the notorious al-Anfal campaign that includes using chemical weapons against unarmed civilians, leaving thousands dead.

## 1991

After the success of Operation Desert Shield, the US-led Coalition decimates the Iraqi military occupying Kuwait. The Kurds in the north and the Shia in the south launch separate rebellions.

## 1994

With a no-fly zone enforced by the US over Northern Iraq a civil war erupts between the KDP and the PUK, who sought help from Iran. Fighting lasts until 1997.



## 1999

The PKK's elusive leader Abdullah Öcalan is captured in Kenya by Turkish commandos. He is immediately flown to Turkey under armed guard then tried and imprisoned in Imrali Island.

## 2003

Another US-led Coalition blitzes Saddam Hussein's Iraq and captures Baghdad. American Green Berets are deployed to Kurdistan where they fight alongside the Peshmerga and reaffirm a strong bilateral relationship.



apparatus – who recruited prison inmates and Kurdish paramilitaries to suppress dissidents – were given free rein against the PKK.

### The party and the caliphate

When Turkish commandos arrested Öcalan in 1999, the war against the PKK had destroyed 3,000 Kurdish villages and caused between 40,000 and 45,000 deaths. It forced the group to seek shelter in Iraq's inaccessible Qandil in the Zagros mountains where the Party of Free Life (PJAK) – an Iranian Kurdish rebel group – would later arise. The PKK's support from Damascus allowed them to share their revolutionary values, governance style, and feminism with Syria's own Kurdish minority. This legacy endures as female empowerment and leadership by committee are hallmarks of Rojava's current self-rule. It's not surprising to find Öcalan's portrait in many homes and offices; local Kurds consider him an icon and national hero.

Not wishing to make a martyr of him, Öcalan was sentenced to the prison island of Imrali in the Marmara Sea, but this didn't mean the war with the PKK ended. In 2015, violence flared anew between Kurdish dissidents and the Turkish government after President Erdogan's ruling AKP party lost its majority control of parliament during the elections in June. The brunt of the Turkish military was preoccupied with suppressing the Kurds in Diyarbakir, Cirze, and the Idil District in the first quarter of the year. This is what compelled Kamuran Yüksek, a young Kurdish politician, to paint a grim picture of what's in store for the region. "If the government refuses to change its policies... the country could descend into civil war."

As the fortunes of Kurds ebb in Turkey, their dreams for independence are alight in Syria where the Rojava's leaders have managed to foster relations with the Assad regime, the US, and Russia. A boon to the Rojavan cause is the prolonged campaign against the caliphate that emerged at their doorstep.

The organisation Arab countries call Daesh is a chimera far-removed from its earlier iteration as a local Al-Qaeda branch. It's a combined mujahideen incubator, oil smuggling racket, human trafficking syndicate, and umbrella organisation inspiring the allegiance of militant groups from West Africa to Southeast Asia.

But at its core Daesh combines bloodthirsty firebrands with an unexpected ally. At some point between 2009 and 2011, former members of Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI), including a Quranic scholar and football fan named Ibrahim al-Badri, agreed to reorganise themselves according to a plan by an ex-Baathist intelligence officer. This mysterious 'Haji Bakr', who was recognisable for his grey beard, literally drew up a step-by-step guide for a secret police state in Syria and Iraq that used



Fighting between Kurdish gunmen and terrorists from the Syrian arm of Al-Qaeda is raging in the Hassakeh Province

The months long battle for the border town of Kobane in Northern Syria humiliated ISIS



#### 2006

An undeclared Iraqi civil war erupts following the destruction of the al-Askari mosque and death squads begin targeting civilians while the US military struggles to contain the situation.

While Baghdad tears itself apart Kurdistan remains relatively peaceful.



#### 2011

After almost a decade of occupation and haphazard nation building the US military completes its withdrawal from Iraq. Massive street demonstrations in Tunisia, Libya, and Egypt herald the Arab Spring.

#### 2012

With Syria in the grip of a full-blown civil war the Assad regime's authority erodes. This enables the spread of radical Islamist groups and sets the stage for the Rojava Revolution.

#### 2013

An Islamist faction based in Eastern Syrian called the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) begins a campaign of terror that reaches all the way to Baghdad.

#### 2014

Mosul suddenly falls to the Islamic State in June. Daesh soon wrest much of Northern Iraq and attempt to overrun the Kurdish cantons in the Rojava.





The inclusion of women in Kurdish militias stems from hard-core Marxism rather than age-old custom



jihadi ideology to mobilise popular discontent among Sunnis as a recruiting tactic.

As ridiculous as this appeared, it had large success in 2014 and gave birth to the Islamic State under the titular leadership of al-Badri, now named Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. True to their ultra-violent strain of Sunni populism, they targeted Christians, Shiites, and Yazidi Kurds for enslavement and extermination. Even if they were able to humiliatingly rout the Iraqi Army in the, in the process capturing vast stockpiles of conventional weapons, they soon blundered.

Their defeat in the Battle of Kobane from September 2014 to January 2015 set the tone for a brand new struggle unfolding across the Levant today. When Kobane's citizens fled en masse across the Turkish border, Ankara was quick to impose a blockade, thereby revealing its deep-seated hostility towards the Kurds. At the same time it was the finest hour for the YPG and their female counterparts, the Women's Protection Unit (YPJ), who fought street-by-street with nothing but rifles and a few machineguns. This increased the profile of the Rojava Revolution, a simultaneous propaganda coup and publicity blitz writ large, feeding on an international audience's contempt for the barbaric Daesh.

Kobane showed the Kurds, whether in Syria or Iraq, were a better choice of allies. As thousands of young Muslims joined Daesh for their own idealistic reasons, the same adventurous spirit possessed American volunteers to join the Kurds in a fight against evil. As the authors of an open

## "TRUE TO THEIR ULTRAVIOLENT STRAIN OF SUNNI POPULISM, THEY TARGETED CHRISTIANS, SHIITES, AND YEZIDI KURDS FOR ENSLAVEMENT"

source report titled *The Other Foreign Fighters* observed, these intrepid Americans – along with an equal number of Europeans – were easily welcomed into Kurdish paramilitary groups.

It's hard to admire the Kurds when their past misdeeds are examined. On the other hand, the Kurds' secular values that can be traced to radical Marxism, as well as their underdog status and sheer courage against the odds, are more appealing for the West when compared with the sectarianism and bigotry pervading other groups.

If the tricolour of Kurdistan flies in a unified Rojava or a Mosul liberated from Daesh, the leaders of Iran, Iraq, Turkey, Syria, along with America, Russia, Britain, and France have to confront a Kurdish Spring with teeth.

This time there won't be any lingering dictator to oppress them. Today's Kurds have small-scale government institutions, militias, valuable real estate, and historical scores to settle. Whoever chooses to fight them now does so at their own risk.

## THE KURDISH SCATTERING

THIS DISPERSED POPULATION IS SPREAD OVER SIX DIFFERENT STATES

Of an estimated 30 million Kurds in the Middle East nearly half live in Eastern Turkey. It's in Kurdistan, Northern Iraq, however, that the Kurds enjoy an incomparable degree of

autonomous rule. Kurdish communities are also found in Azerbaijan, Georgia, Armenia, and even along the shores of the Caspian.



### 2015

In November Russia announces it's deploying a token force in Syria. An aggressive air campaign is launched against the Syrian opposition and material aid boosts Assad's military.

### 2016

In February units of the YPG supported by US air strikes successfully link two of the three Kurdish cantons in the Rojava, a breakthrough that compels Turkey to prepare for an assault on Syria.



**"HIS CONDUCT IN FRANCE WAS COLDLY BRUTAL TO THOSE WHO DENIED THEIR ALLEGIANCE TO HIM. HIS LIFE IS A CONTRADICTION MIXTURE OF IDEALISTIC HEROISM VERSUS BARBARIC TERROR"**



*Prince Edward standing over the body of King John of Bohemia. It is reputed that Edward adopted John's badge as his own to honour the blind king's courage*





# PRINCE OF DARKNESS

Known to history as 'The Black Prince', the eldest son of Edward III was a renowned military commander, with a reputation for chivalry, as well as a penchant for mass destruction and calculated violence

WORDS TOM GARNER

**O**n the evening of 19 September 1356, the heir to the throne of England entertained the King of France in his tent, near the town of Poitiers in western France. However, this was no ordinary royal meeting. The king had been captured on the field of battle and was at the mercy of one of the most legendary figures in medieval history. Although he was only in his mid-twenties, Edward, Prince of Wales, was at the pinnacle of his military career. His life personally symbolises the first half of the Hundred Years' War, when England fought for the right to wear the French crown.

Edward, along with his father and namesake Edward III, epitomises the martial glory of the initial English victories and gained a reputation for courage and chivalry. However, Edward is known to history as 'The Black Prince', and, in many ways, his conduct in France was coldly brutal to those who denied their allegiance to him. His life was a contradictory mixture of idealistic heroism versus barbaric terror.

Born in 1330, Edward was brought up to be a soldier. In the medieval world the ideal king had to be a warrior and Edward III wanted his son to be in military training from an early age. At the age of seven, Edward had already been equipped with a complete suit of armour and in the same year the conflict that would become

known as the Hundred Years' War began. Prince Edward would spend the rest of his life vigorously, and sometimes controversially, fighting his father's cause and his military career began in earnest at the age of 16.

## Winning his spurs

In July 1346, Edward III's army landed unopposed in France at La Hogue. The following day the king knighted Prince Edward to mark the beginning of his career as a soldier. The prince immediately exercised his rights to create other knights and in the subsequent march across Normandy the vanguard was nominally under his command. The French caught up with the English on the north bank of the River Somme and Edward III selected a site near the village of Crécy in order to give battle.

The English numbered between 9-12,000 men but were fighting a French army of about 30,000 under King Philip VI. Edward III deployed his men in defensive order on a hill with archers and two divisions in the front, and the king's division forming the reserve.

Prince Edward was in the centre of his men, surrounded by his household knights and two earls. Although the French and Genoese soldiers were continually harassed by English longbows, the brunt of the hand-to-hand fighting fell on Prince Edward's men.



*King John II (centre left, in white) fought bravely at Poitiers but was ultimately captured and presented to Prince Edward. The king would die in captivity in England with his huge ransom unpaid*



Young Edward was in the thick of the fighting from the outset, and many stories are now attached to his conduct. It was reported that the Duke of Alençon, who led the first French charge, beat down the prince's standard just before he was killed.

A second French charge penetrated into Edward's division and the prince was in considerable personal danger, with some saying that he was forced to his knees and captured by the Count of Hainault before being rescued by his standard-bearer Sir Richard Fitz-Simon. In what would normally have been a serious breach of discipline, Fitz-Simon had to lower his banner in order to defend the prince.

One of the most famous stories concerns the messenger sent to Edward III at the moment of crisis to request help for the prince. The king reputedly replied, "Let the boy win his spurs." When Edward III eventually sent 20 knights to rescue his son, he found the prince and his men resting and leaning on their swords, having repulsed the French attack.

Prince Edward's courage during his first major engagement at the Battle of Crécy impressed his contemporaries. According to legend, he honoured the memory of the slain, blind King John of Bohemia by adopting his personal badge of three feathers as his own, which is still the symbol of the Prince of Wales today.

There was, however, a contrasting response to the knightly bravura. According to a Hainault chronicler, when Edward III asked his son what he thought of going into battle it is reported that the prince, "said nothing and was ashamed". If this account were true, then it would be at odds with Edward's later behaviour.

### **Clash on the waves**

After Crécy, the French signed a truce with the English that was prolonged by the outbreak of the deadly Black Death. By the summer of 1350 the war was resumed.

English plans for an Anglo-Castilian marriage alliance involving Edward's sister Joan fell apart when she died of the plague. The French seized this opportunity to encourage the Castilians to send a large fleet to harass shipping in the English Channel.

By July 1350 the English had assembled a fleet at Sandwich and in mid-August a Castilian host was off Winchelsea. Both Prince Edward

**"WHEN EDWARD III EVENTUALLY SENT 20 KNIGHTS TO RESCUE HIS SON, HE FOUND THE PRINCE AND HIS MEN RESTING AND LEANING ON THEIR SWORDS, HAVING REPULSED THE FRENCH ATTACK"**





## THE GARTER

THE PRINCE OF WALES HELPED TO FOUND ONE OF THE UNITED KINGDOM'S MOST PRESTIGIOUS HONOURS

Prince Edward was actively involved in the foundation of the Order of the Garter in what is usually accepted as 1348. Today it is the third most prestigious honour that the British state can award after the Victoria and George Crosses, with membership numbers always capped at 24 Companions. It has a reputation for epitomising the chivalric knightly ideal but its foundation was grounded much more in the power politics of the time. The Order was designed to bring together the inner circle of Edward III's military commanders in France, who also happened to be his companions in the jousting arena. Some of the earliest records of the Order's existence come from Prince Edward's wardrobe accounts. In December 1348 Edward's wardrobe keeper bought 24 garters that were given to the first knights at an unspecified date. At the home of the Order in Saint George's Chapel, Windsor, one of the sets of facing stalls was designated for Edward III, the other for Prince Edward.

The reason for the Order's foundation is generally accepted as being political, which is reflected in the choice of heraldry and motto. On the Order's badge the gold and blue of France is combined with words that refer to the English claim to the French throne, 'Shame on him who thinks evil of it'. The romantic origins for the Order were invented in later years and have no basis in reality. Indeed, the Order was effectively an official celebration of the English victory at Crécy and cemented the companionship of the king, prince and nobles who had taken part. The choice of the garter itself possibly originated in a tournament badge, particularly as it had the practical advantage that it could be worn outside armour.

*Below: Prince Edward was one of the founding members of the Order of the Garter*



**"ACCORDING TO LEGEND, HE HONOURED THE MEMORY OF THE SLAIN, BLIND KING JOHN OF BOHEMIA BY ADOPTING HIS PERSONAL BADGE OF THREE FEATHERS AS HIS OWN, WHICH IS STILL THE SYMBOL OF THE PRINCE OF WALES TODAY"**

and his father embarked on 28 August and on the next evening the two fleets engaged. The English rammed and boarded Castilian ships, before the crews clashed on the decks. In the fray, the king's ship was sunk and Edward III had to scramble aboard a Castilian ship. Similarly, Prince Edward's ship was sinking when his brother John sailed alongside and rescued him. The battle was a fierce contest, but ended with the retreat of the Castilians at twilight, with the remainder being captured by the English.

Afterwards the king and his sons anchored at Winchelsea and Rye and conscripted horses from the towns to convey the news to Queen Philippa. It is recorded the royal family spent the night revelling and recounting tales of the day's fighting, which appears to be a coldly decadent contrast to the maritime slaughter that had taken place only hours before. Edward III made much of his naval victory and the new coinage of 1351 reflected his claim to be the

'King of the Sea' with the martial monarch shown to be standing in a ship. As for Prince Edward, the fight at Winchelsea only served to enhance his warrior reputation, which would increase in the years ahead. His career would also begin to be tainted by an increasing harshness in his conduct of the war in France.

### Le terrible Prince Noir

Final truces with France ended in the mid-1350s and Prince Edward was granted his own theatre of operations in Gascony, which at that time was an English possession. The prince was enthusiastic and wrote that he, "prayed the king to grant him leave to be the first to pass beyond the sea." He formally sailed to southwest France with full powers to administer English territories there. He also received a military contract of service, which made provisions for events such as the capture of 'the head of the war' (i.e. the main French commander) and the prince's own possible capture.



# THE BATTLE OF NAJERA

ON 3 APRIL 1367, THE PRINCE OF WALES USED THE FAMOUS ENGLISH LONGBOWMEN TO WIN A BRILLIANT VICTORY IN SPAIN

Nájera was the Black Prince's last great triumph and is interesting because it was a victory of the English longbow that was fought not in France, but in Spain. When Peter the Cruel of Castile was deposed by his half-brother Henry of Trastámara, he

travelled to Bordeaux where he appealed to Edward to help regain his throne. Edward, who needed Peter to topple a French ally like Henry, assembled an Anglo-Gascon-Majorcan army of 28,000 men and crossed the Pyrenees in February 1367 and

marched into Spain. On 3 April, he encountered a combined Castilian-French army of 60,000 men near the town of Nájera. He faced not just Henry, but the renowned Breton soldier Bertrand du Guesclin, the future Constable of France.



Left: The Battle of Nájera was the Black Prince's last great victory. English longbowmen wreaked devastation on the Castilian cavalry

**"THE HEAVY CAVALRY CHARGE, BUT ARE SHOT DOWN BEFORE THEY EVEN REACH THE UNITS THEY ARE ATTACKING"**

## 01 DU GUESCLIN STRIKES

Leading the vanguard, Bertrand du Guesclin smashes into the division of John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster. English archers disperse the Castilian crossbowmen but the battle turns into a tightly pressed melee. Lancaster and du Guesclin remain locked in hand-to-hand combat for the rest of the battle.

## 02 CASTILIAN CAVALRY CHARGE

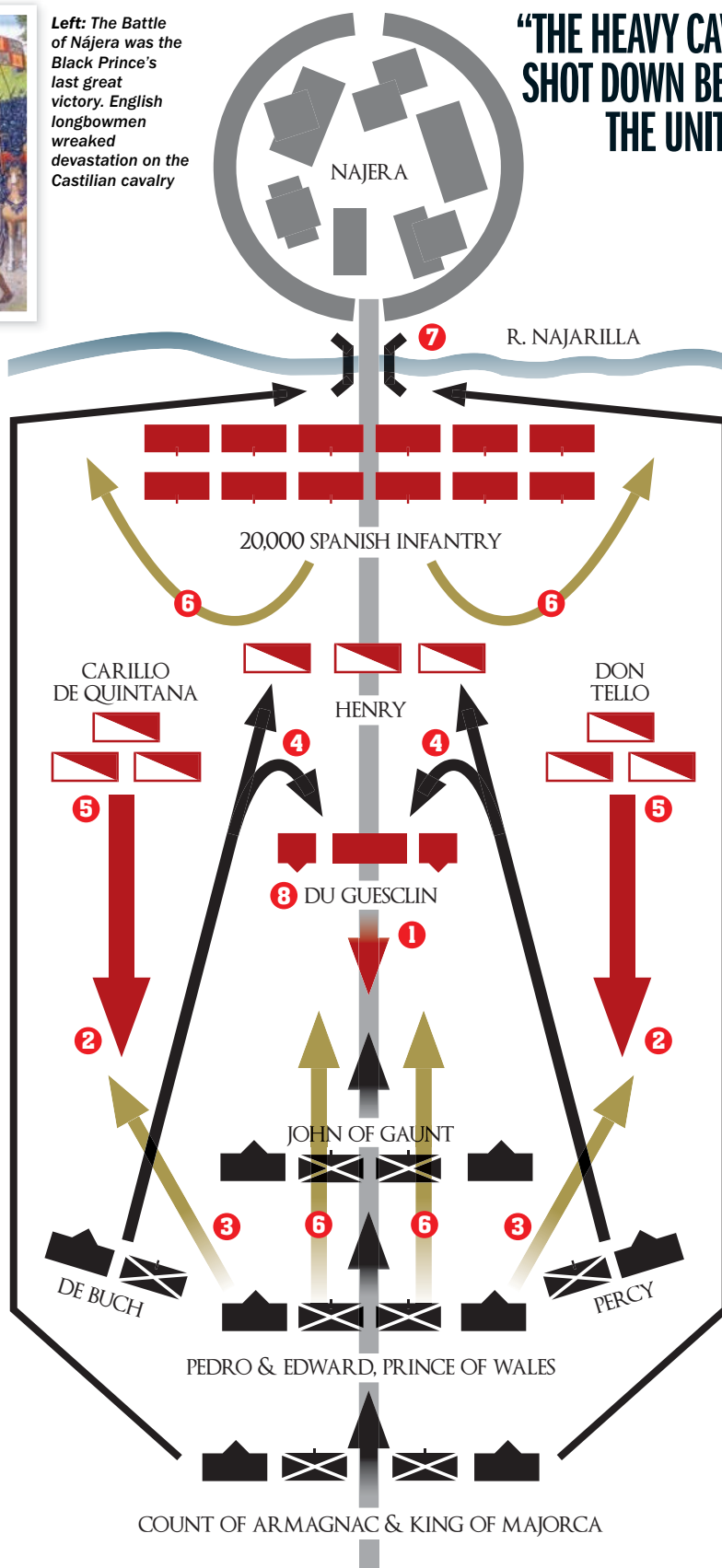
The Castilian light cavalry now charge the opposing flanks of Edward's army. They harass the sides of the opposition and probe for weak spots for heavy cavalry to break through but the archers shoot them down in droves.

## 03 ENGLISH ARCHERS DECIMATE CAVALRY

The Castilian light cavalry try to reorganise but are once again hampered by English arrows. In an attempt to restore morale, the heavy cavalry charge, but are shot down before they even reach the units they are attacking. The remaining cavalry flees the field.

## 04 PERCY AND DE BUCH COMBINE FORCES

The flanks of Sir Thomas Percy and Jean de Grailly III, Captal de Buch now move forward together and link up behind du Guesclin's division, which is still fighting Lancaster. The men-at-arms turn to face du Guesclin's men from the rear while the archers face out against the inevitable Castilian counterattack.



## 05 HENRY ATTACKS THE ANGLO-GASCON LINE

Henry of Trastámara realises that the Percy-de Buch line has to be broken. His knights charge three times but they are continually repulsed by arrows.

## 06 HENRY'S LAST GAMBLE

Edward now moves up his own central division to increase pressure on du Guesclin. Henry desperately sends in his infantry en masse, but it never gets to Edward's division. Despite being outnumbered, the archers wait until the infantry are in range and then loose continuous volleys. Both Henry and his infantry flee the field.

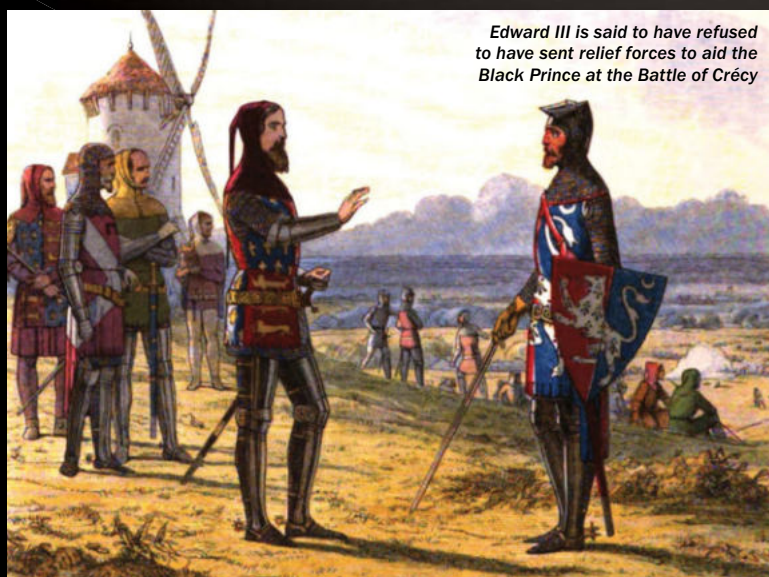
## 07 MURDER BY THE RIVER NAJERILLA

The Castilian cavalry is able to scatter but the infantry can only escape over a narrow bridge across the Najarilla. The fresh third division in the Anglo-Gascon army, which is led by the King of Majorca, sweeps around the Percy-de Buch line and chase after the infantry. Many Castilians are killed both in the press and by drowning.

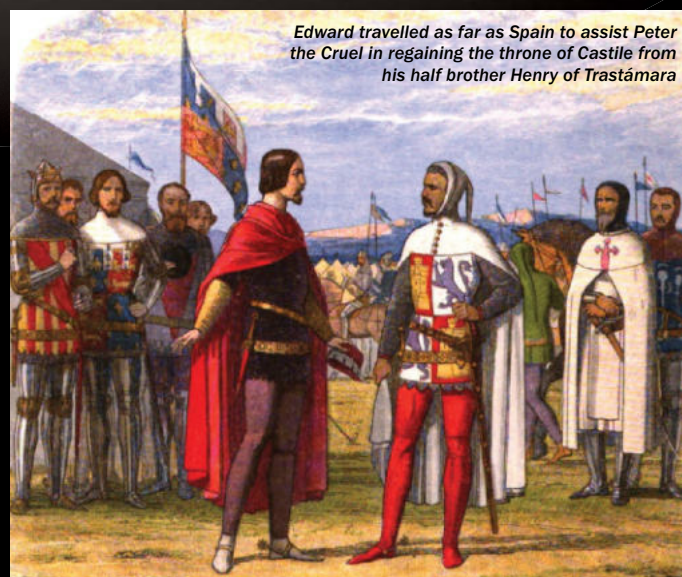
## 08 DU GUESCLIN SURRENDERS

By now completely surrounded, Du Guesclin does not surrender until he realises that the Castilian army has gone. He surrenders to Captal de Buch who had previously been captured by du Guesclin at the Battle of Cocherel. The French and Castilians suffer 7,000 dead while the Anglo-Gascon casualties are much lower. Prince Edward is victorious and has to prevent a vengeful Peter the Cruel from executing prisoners out of hand after the battle, arguing for valuable ransoms instead.





Edward III is said to have refused to have sent relief forces to aid the Black Prince at the Battle of Crécy



Edward travelled as far as Spain to assist Peter the Cruel in regaining the throne of Castile from his half brother Henry of Trastámara



The 1355 chevauchée deliberately laid waste to much of southern France and the Black Prince sacked many towns including Carcassonne

Edward landed at Bordeaux on 20 September 1355, and his combined Anglo-Gascon army of 6-8,000 men set out on 5 October with the aim of conducting a 'chevauchée' – a raid designed to weaken the enemy's supplies and prestige by deliberately burning and pillaging towns and villages. It was effectively a form of authorised terrorism, and was used throughout the Hundred Years' War, with Edward helping to legitimise this wanton destruction.

The Prince's target in 1355 was the lands of Jean d'Armagnac who had been appointed by John II of France to put pressure on English territories. Once his army reached enemy lands on 10 October, it moved into three columns and spread out to live off the land and a fortnight was spent ravaging d'Armagnac lands. The army even had portable bridges to increase the range of the pillaging. Edward then moved into Languedoc and was able to inflict considerable damage on local towns, including the town of Carcassonne, which he seized and burned.

By 8 November he had reached the furthest point of his march at Narbonne on the Mediterranean shore where the town was taken

despite fierce resistance – but its castle held out. Edward returned to friendly territory on 27 November, having not once engaged the French in open battle. The French had deliberately avoided him, making them appear hesitant and thereby giving the prince a propaganda victory.

The chevauchée was a nightmare for the people of southern France. At Montisgard it was recorded that men, women and children were slaughtered indiscriminately and this was a scene repeated across the region. In the 19th century, carbonised remains of burnt grain could still be found in the ruins of Montbrun-Lauragais and it was said that even the Pope feared for his safety at Avignon. It is likely that Edward's famous nickname originates from this raid – in the parts that he passed through he was known as 'le terrible Prince Noir'. The damage was such that well into the 20th century there was a local oral tradition among peasants who related stories about a figure known as 'L'Homme Noir' who had passed by with an army in the Middle Ages.

The chevauchée also disrupted the economic productivity of the region and consequently

the French ability to withstand English attacks was diminished. Edward's steward explained, "The countryside and towns which have been destroyed in this raid produced more revenue for the king of France in aid of his wars than half his kingdom." In December 1355, Edward justified the raid in a letter to the Bishop of Winchester: "We rode afterwards through the land of Armagnac, harrying and wasting the country, whereby the lieges of our said most honoured lord, whom the count had before oppressed, were much comforted." Edward was implying that the local nobility were grateful for his intervention but was apparently unconcerned about the suffering that his army committed. This coldness implies that Edward only reserved his chivalric behaviour for fellow members of the nobility.

### Triumph at Poitiers

In August 1356, Edward launched another chevauchée into France from Aquitaine. He adopted a scorched earth policy as he advanced north to ease pressure on English garrisons in northern and central France, but was stopped at Tours when he failed to take the castle. At the same time, he heard that John II was marching south from Normandy to destroy his army at Tours, so Edward began to retreat back towards Bordeaux but the French king caught up with him near Poitiers. At this stage Edward offered to give up the

**"IT WAS EFFECTIVELY A FORM OF AUTHORISED TERRORISM, AND WAS USED THROUGHOUT THE HUNDRED YEARS' WAR, WITH EDWARD HELPING TO LEGITIMISE THIS WANTON DESTRUCTION"**



loot his army had stolen in exchange for a safe passage but this was rebuffed. With no options left, Edward turned his Anglo-Gascon army of 6,000 men to face a French army of at least 20,000 on 19 September. He formed his army into three divisions with his archers on the flanks and retained his own division in the rear with an elite cavalry unit. Edward then arranged his men behind a low hedge for protection, with marshes to the left and wagons to the right.

King John arranged his own men into four 'battles' led by himself, the Dauphin, Baron Clermont and the Duke of Orléans. Both the Dauphin and Clermont attacked the English, but were swept back by hails of arrows and counterattacks by English men-at-arms. The Dauphin's forces then crashed into Orléans' approaching division, before running into John's division, causing confusion. Had the French not panicked at this stage, they could have routed Edward's men who were becoming exhausted

**"IT WAS A HUGE VICTORY FOR EDWARD. AT A MINIMAL COST, 2,000 FRENCHMEN WERE KILLED WITH ANOTHER 2,000 CAPTURED INCLUDING THE BIGGEST PRIZE: KING JOHN"**

and had started to collect their wounded. Instead Edward ordered his men to break cover from the hedge and charged the French while simultaneously launching his cavalry to flank the enemy. After a hard fight, the English stood their ground and the French line collapsed.

It was a huge victory for Edward. At a minimal cost, 2,000 Frenchmen were killed with another 2,000 captured including the biggest prize: King John. He was brought to Edward's tent, where the prince served him and according to one chronicler said that John's personal bravery, "had outdone his own greatest knights". This was little consolation to John who was taken back to England in triumph. Edward was treated to a great procession in London, where the water conduits apparently ran with wine, while John wore a sombre black robe. He had good reason to; his capture had huge ramifications in France where his ransom was more than the yearly income of the country. Some said it was twice as much and John eventually died in English captivity, with his country in a broken state of anarchy.

*Left: Prince Edward took part in the naval Battle of Winchelsea in 1350. The English victory encouraged Edward III to issue new coinage in 1351 depicting him as 'King of the Sea'*

### Into darkness

Poitiers was the pinnacle of Edward's military career and he seemed ready to succeed his father as a powerful King Edward IV. He ruled Aquitaine as a semi-independent principality between the years of 1360-67 and won a further dramatic victory in Spain at Nájera in 1367, but after the Spanish campaign he became increasingly ill.

In a highly controversial incident at the Siege of Limoges in 1370, a now litter-bound prince ordered the sacking of the captured town. According to the chronicler, Jean Froissart, "It was a most melancholy business; for all ranks, ages and sexes cast themselves on their knees before the prince, begging for mercy; but he was so inflamed with passion and revenge that he listened to none, but all were put to the sword, wherever they could be found." This has since been highly disputed among historians, but whatever the truth, Limoges greatly stained Edward's reputation.

The prince's health continued to deteriorate and he died aged 46 in 1376, a year before his father. The once mighty prince never became king, and instead left a mixed legacy of military glory, selective chivalry and a bitter memory of brutal bloodshed.



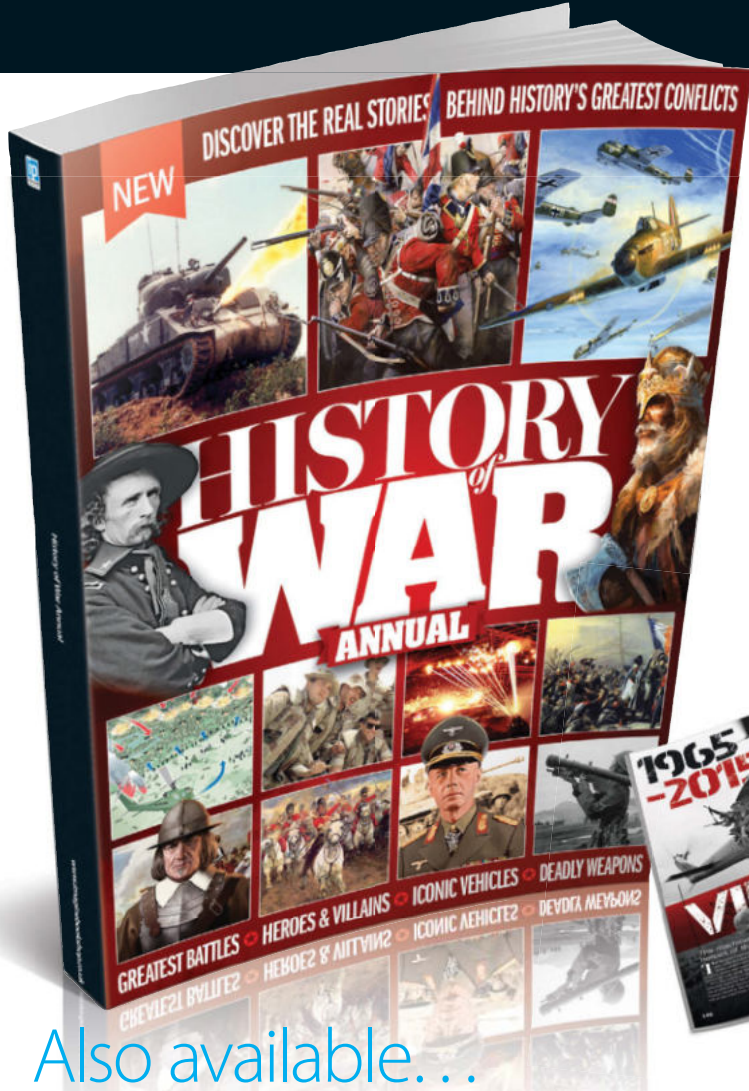
*Edward died in 1376 and was buried in Canterbury Cathedral, the first Prince of Wales never to succeed to the throne of England*



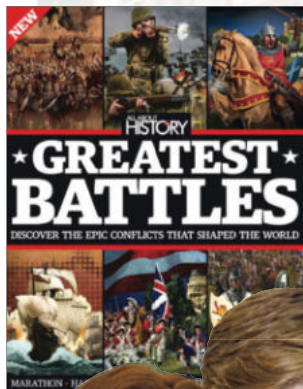
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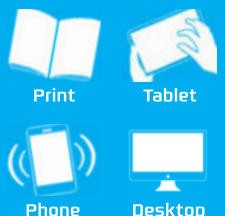
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# BOOK REVIEWS

Our pick of the newest military history titles waiting for you on the shelves

## NATIONS TORN ASUNDER THE CHALLENGE OF CIVIL WAR

FIRST-EVER GENERAL STUDY OF HOW CIVIL WARS START AND THEN MANIFEST THEMSELVES MAKES FOR BOTH FASCINATING AND DISTURBING READING

**Writer:** Bill Kissane

**Publisher:** Oxford University Press

**Price:** £18.99 **Released:** Out now

War takes on many forms and in the era since World War II, it has manifested itself most frequently in the shape of civil conflict with clashes between rival states growing increasingly rare.

In Bill Kissane's excellent new book he takes this truth as his starting point to explore just what causes civil wars, what sort of patterns they typically follow, the damage generally caused by them as well as investigate their most likely consequences.

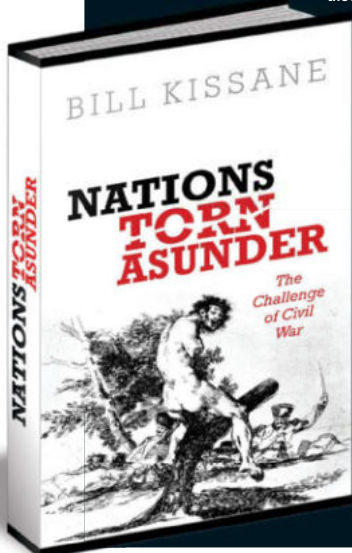
This is apparently the first time a general study of civil war has ever been written, and the results are fascinating. In the past, historians have tended to focus on specific conflicts such as the American Civil War or Spanish Civil War, writing about them in isolation. What this book does is to put civil wars in the context of both history and each other.

Kissane does this by using a mixture of political science – to explore the similarities between the myriad civil conflicts that have taken place globally since 1945 – and historical insights dating back as far as the Ancient Greeks. Indeed 5th-century BCE historian Thucydides is a constant presence throughout and even gets bigged up as 'the first political scientist'.

Kissane's work concludes with an exploration of human divisiveness in an essay that is both insightful and disturbing, not least when he points out "civil wars have arisen in every regime known to mankind."

A truly fascinating read that goes a long way to unravelling the sinister forces that turn neighbour against neighbour and transform once thriving communities into killing fields.

Given the current events in Syria, and elsewhere in the Middle East in recent years, this important book couldn't be more timely.



## THE RISING: IRELAND: 1916

**Writer:** Fearghal McGarry **Publisher:** Oxford University Press

**Price:** £20 **Released:** Out now

THIS VERY READABLE AND INFORMED ACCOUNT OF THE EASTER RISING IS A NOTABLE WORK THAT IS HIGHLY APPROPRIATE FOR THE 2016 CENTENARY COMMEMORATIONS

The Easter Rising of 1916 is the seminal moment of modern Irish history. Although the rebellion itself was a military failure, it led to a heavy-handed British response. In turn it helped to spark the chain of events that would lead to the creation of an Irish Free State in December 1922 and the partition of the states that still exist to this day.

The events of 1916 have cast a long shadow over the past 100 years. In that time much has been written about the bloody rebellion that has taken on both a legendary and deeply controversial significance. To mark the centenary, Fearghal McGarry has achieved possibly the most balanced account of the Rising that has yet been attempted in *The Rising: Ireland Easter 1916*.

Using new sources, McGarry has collected over 1,700 eyewitness statements that detail the activities of all parties involved in the Rising, from revolutionary republicans and socialists (both men and women), to civilians caught up in the unexpected chaos and British soldiers who were taken aback by this backdoor uprising during World War I in what was then an integral part of the United Kingdom. Indeed what sets this work apart is an acknowledgement that the Rising was an important, if forgotten, part of British history and McGarry's objective portrayal of this fact is both fascinating and timely. For this 2016 edition, McGarry has included a new preface, which details the relevance of the Easter Rising

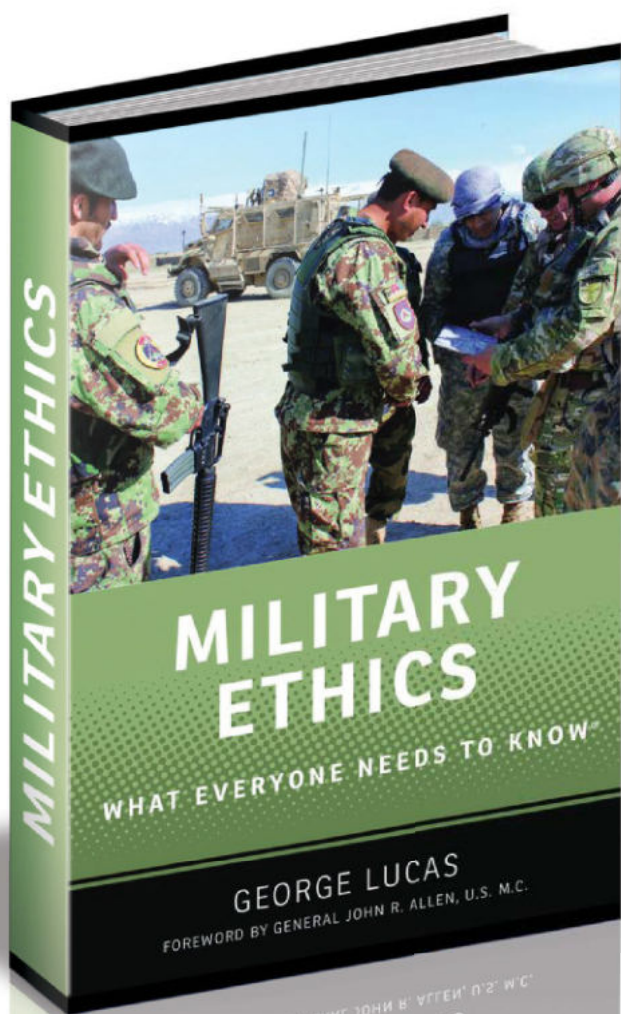
in 2016, both in Ireland itself, and how it ties in with a new, positive stage in British-Irish relations that has been fostered by the Peace Process in Northern Ireland and a shared 'Decade of Centenaries'.

This is an excellent introduction for anyone who seeks to understand the beginning of the modern Irish Republic and its enduring legacy in the complicated political history between Ireland and Britain.

**"THE EVENTS OF 1916  
HAVE CAST A LONG  
SHADOW OVER THE  
PAST 100 YEARS"**







# MILITARY ETHICS

## WHAT EVERYONE NEEDS TO KNOW

**Writer:** George Lucas **Publisher:** Oxford University Press

**Price:** £10.99 **Released:** Out now

MORALITY AND MORTAL COMBAT GET PAIRED UP IN THIS HIGHLY READABLE ACADEMIC ARGUMENT FOR FAIR PLAY ON THE MODERN BATTLEFIELD

As Dr George Lucas points out in the introduction to this book, “for many the phrase ‘military ethics’ is an oxymoron.” The good professor clearly expects a sceptical response from his audience, and it is hard, initially, not to sneer at a book that seems to be suggesting war can be ‘civilised’ through some sort of moral framework.

But as you read on you realise Lucas isn’t some naïve apologist for war. He’s fully aware of its iniquity, the damage it does to combatants and civilians as well as the cost to our planet. Rather he seems to see war as almost a fact of life – something we continue to propagate despite ourselves.

Sure, some politicians may attempt to justify conflict – indeed Lucas writes at length on the ‘just war tradition’ – but for most sane citizens of planet earth in the 21st century, war is something that needs eradicating before it eradicates

us. And yet one need only turn on a TV to see how much it thrives. So, Lucas argues, maybe we can limit its impact and damage by ensuring the professional organisations that fight wars employ an ethical code. In other words, no more Abu Ghraib, Guantanamo or Haditha.

While the book concerns itself with the ethics of modern warfare, Lucas reaches far back in history to explain his ideas. Homer, Sun Tzu, the Prophet Muhammad, and Von Clausewitz are among the many military thinkers who get name checked as Lucas explores themes ranging from the use of international law to the misuse of private security contractors. His work is especially intriguing when it comes to the impact of drone technology on the modern battlefield.

All in all, an insightful take on an age-old subject, and one that raises as many questions as it answers.

# STATIONS OF COASTAL COMMAND THEN & NOW

**Author:** David Smith **Publisher:** Battle of Britain International Ltd

**Price:** £37.50 **Released:** Out Now

A HISTORY OF THE RAF COMMAND CENTRES OF WORLD WAR II

The vital role that the RAF coastal commands of WWII played in the final allied victory is beautifully outlined in this pick-up-put-down book.

From the northern reaches of the United Kingdom to Gibraltar, Iceland and the Azores, Britain’s RAF flew countless sorties from these strategically positioned strongholds in their efforts to defend allied shipping from the dreaded German U-boats and in turn hunt these underwater assassins.

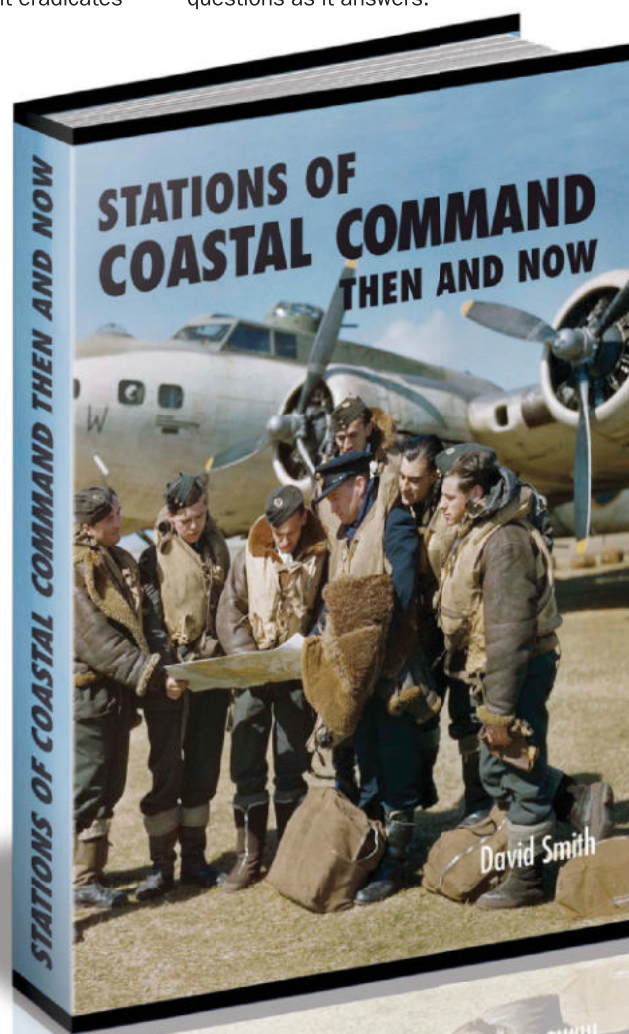
With a wealth of stunning photographs supplemented by in-depth research, Smith catalogues each of the command bases in minute detail, recounting the day to day life of the brave servicemen who relied upon them to successfully repel Hitler’s navy.

Many of these command centres still exist today, some functioning as bases

for the current British Armed Forces. Sadly, many were allowed to become ruined reminders of part of Britain’s last line of defence during 1940 as Europe lay at Germany’s feet. The inclusion of bases outside of the UK adds another intriguing layer to this book.

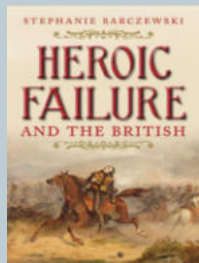
Whether you are a seasoned RAF enthusiast or relatively new to this chapter of Britain’s military history, Smith’s work is sure to offer something for all. For this is a splendid testament to the courageous men who flew above the deep, dark oceans surrounding their homeland, committing themselves to long, uncomfortable flights and the very real risk of death or serious injury.

The bomber boys and fighter pilots are rightly hailed as heroes. One hopes that David Smith’s work will help to remind readers that they were not alone.





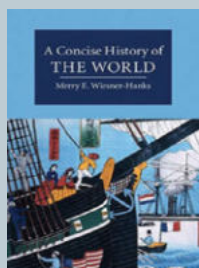
## ALL ABOUT HISTORY RECOMMENDED READING



### HEROIC FAILURE AND THE BRITISH

From the charge of the Light Brigade to Scott of the Antarctic, the tendency to turn tragedy into triumph has long been a staple British tendency. It's often said that it is better to have tried and failed than not to

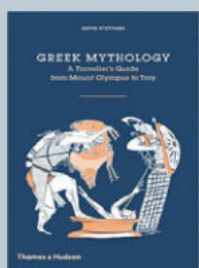
have tried at all, and Stephanie Barczewski follows the mantra to its illogical extreme – those instances where it would probably have been better not to have tried at all.



### A CONCISE HISTORY OF THE WORLD

It's an ambitious author who believes they can condense tens of thousands of years of human history down into a single book, but that is what Merry E Wiesner-Hanks has attempted. Although

possessing a solid historical background, there was some scepticism of what 395 pages could do. However, what we find is a lively and engaging book that wants to entertain.



### GREEK MYTHOLOGY: A TRAVELLER'S GUIDE FROM MOUNT OLYMPUS TO TROY

Offering a fresh take on the myths and legends of the ancient culture of Greece and Turkey by covering

22 locations, this book studies both the historical components that make up the rich history of these areas and guides you through the modern world and what you can still see today. This is a guide aimed to physically allow readers to comprehend the history being explored while also providing an accessible escape into the past for an armchair traveller.



### THE STORY OF LONDON

Modern London is a fascinating and culturally diverse global city and it has a history to match. If you want to discover all the glorious highs and all the shattering lows, *The Story Of London* is a perfect

start. Author Stephen Porter has set out his stall to provide the reader with a concise account of London's past and succeeds completely. The text is delivered chronologically and no stone is left unturned as the city's colourful history is dissected era by era.

# A PASSING FURY

**Writer:** AT Williams **Publisher:** Jonathan Cape **Price:** £25 **Released:** 5 May

A NEW WORK THAT EXPOSES THE TRUTH ABOUT HOW – DESPITE THE NUREMBERG TRIALS – THOUSANDS OF NAZI WAR CRIMINALS ESCAPED PUNISHMENT

This is a fine book that does a great job of debunking one of the most enduring myths in history: namely that the Nuremberg Trials represented a triumph for international justice at the end of World War II.

In truth, as author A.T. Williams reveals in *A Passing Fury*, the Allies largely failed to deliver the retribution they had promised.

While the war was still raging the Allies had planned a vast reckoning against the Nazis, one that was intended to bring every last sadistic death-camp guard, Einsatzgruppen psycho and SS thug before a jury and made to pay for their crimes. This would be done, it was decided, via two complementary procedures – show trials of the big-name Nazis (in the event Göring, Hess and Von Ribbentrop among) at Nuremberg, and local court martials of less notable figures. In fact, all Germans suspected of committing war crimes were to be arrested and given a fair trial in accordance with the rule of law so that they could then be punished accordingly. It was idealistic, ambitious and doomed to failure. By January 1946 the British alone had rounded up over 53,000 suspects.

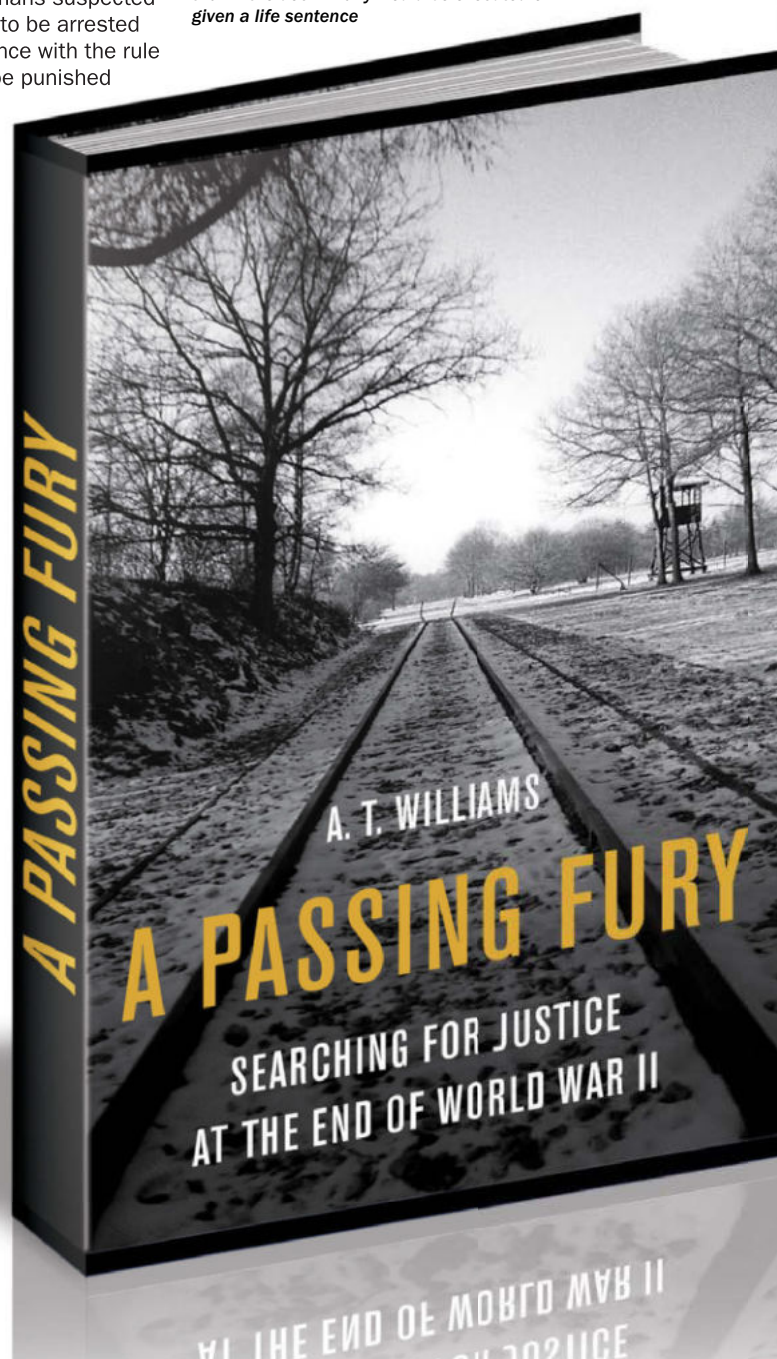
Williams' book relies largely on freshly uncovered evidence that shows how woefully under-resourced British war crimes units were both swamped by the vast numbers and hamstrung by a judicial process that may have represented a fair trial for the accused, but a travesty of justice for their countless victims. In the end less than 300 cases involving 900 suspects were ever processed by the British, and around 250 of those were let off through lack of evidence.

Tens of thousands of others never even saw the inside of a courtroom and simply went home to prosper in Germany's post-war economic boom.

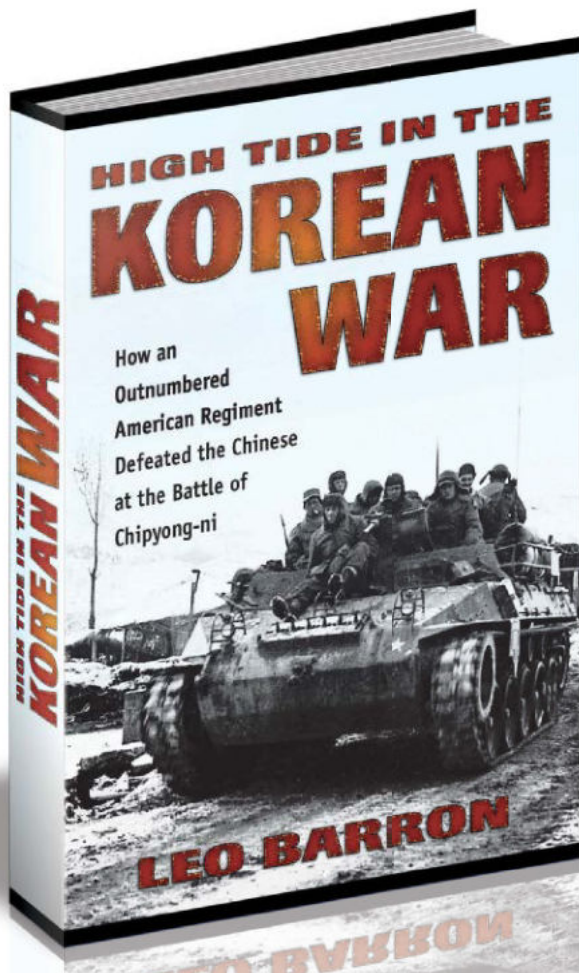
**“IN TRUTH, AS A.T. WILLIAMS REVEALS, THE ALLIES LARGELY FAILED TO DELIVER THE RETRIBUTION THEY HAD PROMISED”**



**Above:** The cream of the Nazi leadership await trial in the dock. Many would be executed or given a life sentence







**"BARRON IMMERSES THE READER IN THE MOST ENTHRALLING EXAMPLE OF VICTORY AGAINST THE ODDS"**



Above: A dramatic army poster illustrating the Battle of Chip'yong-Ni

# HIGH TIDE IN THE KOREAN WAR

**Author:** Leo Barron **Publisher:** Stackpole Books

**Price:** £20 **Released:** Out Now

## THE INCREDIBLE STORY OF ONE REGIMENT'S VICTORY AGAINST AN ARMY

The Korean War of 1950-1953 is often referred to as the 'forgotten war' due to it falling between the end of WWII and the catastrophe of Vietnam. This is despite that fact that it claimed approximately 30,000 American lives.

Author Leo Barron brings the horror of this war to a fresh audience. Told through the accounts of the men who were plucked from the peace of home to be dropped into the fire-storm of North Korea's invasion of its Southern neighbour, Barron immerses the reader in the most enthralling example of victory against the odds.

Vivid descriptions of the ambush and subsequent battle of Chip'yong-ni lay bare the vulnerable position that 4,500 American troops confronted. Within an instant they found themselves trapped on a hillside, with no time to dig in as

a swarm of 25,000 Chinese soldiers began to pepper them with bullets. Somehow they held their ground and eventually repelled the attackers.

The action is all the more gripping thanks to Barron's careful explanation of the geopolitical situation at the time of the war, providing an in-depth examination of its causes and the consequences of defeat.

Had Mao's forces, deployed in the hope of forcing America out of the war, emerged victorious, South Korea would resemble the North and not the flourishing state it is today. A successful North Korean invasion would also have given Stalin the green light to further his rapacious policy of expansion. The brave men at Chip'yong-Ni not only turned the course of the war, they changed the course of history.

# THE SOMME

## THE EPIC BATTLE IN THE SOLDIERS' OWN WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHS

**Author:** Richard van Emden

**Publisher:** Pen and Sword Books

**Price:** £25 **Released:** Out Now

## THE BATTLE OF THE SOMME TOLD BY THOSE WHO FOUGHT IT

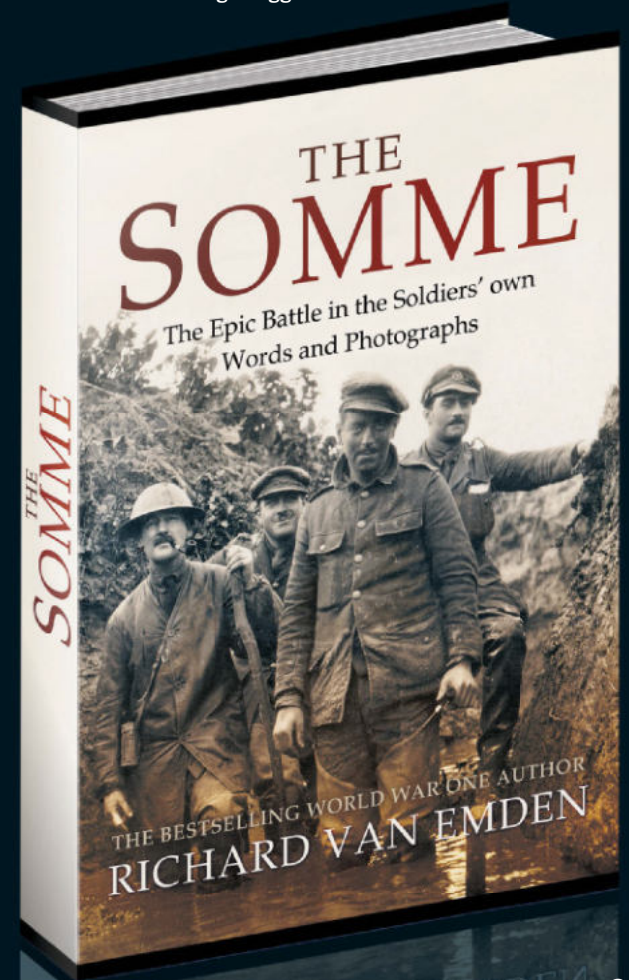
Due to the sheer numbers involved in the Battle of the Somme, it is often easy to overlook the stories of the individuals involved, their suffering lost amongst a sea of mud, blood and barbed wire. The fact that the British incurred over 57,000 casualties on the first day of the fighting goes some way toward demonstrating the extent of the carnage.

However, thanks to authors such as van Emden, the voices of those who were there, the fallen and survivors alike, will echo through time. His dedication to ensuring that their story is heard is written across every page. This is the first book that has been published on the battle that uses the soldiers' own photographs to depict the horrors of life in the trenches of this iconic battle.

This really is the soldiers' story, and as such, it is raw and unvarnished, the pictures exhibiting the truth as opposed to the carefully staged pictures taken by the authorities at the time.

Letters home to loved ones and excerpts from diaries are moving and horrifying in equal measure, while the many examples of the British troops mingling with the French citizens living nearby provide a touching reminder of kindness even in the darkest of times.

Van Emden has saved the best until last, finishing his excellent trilogy of books on WWI with this revelatory collation of first-hand accounts. Time will show it to be a priceless insight into one of the defining struggles of this attritional war.





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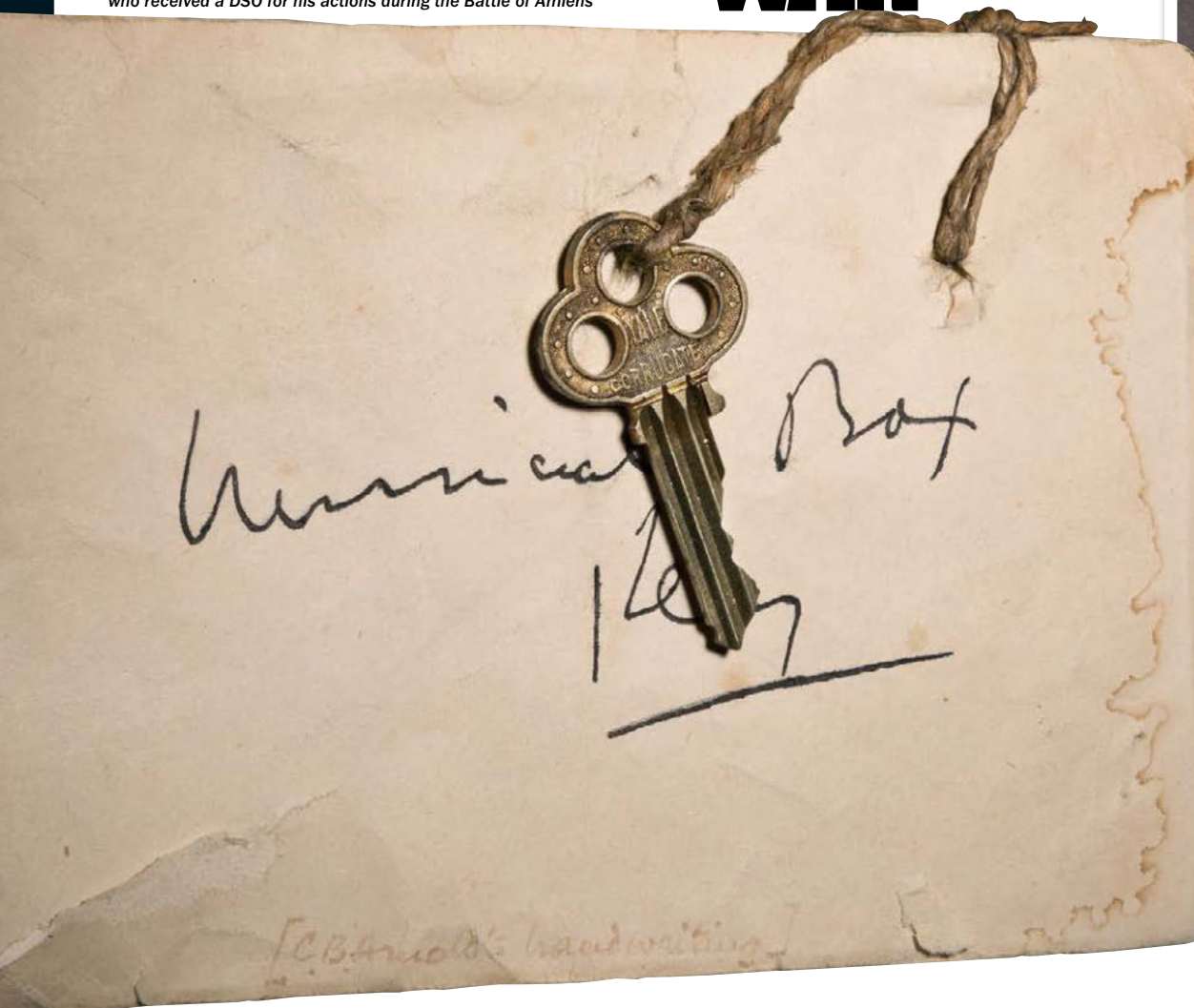
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Below: This Yale key belonged to Lieutenant Clement Arnold who received a DSO for his actions during the Battle of Amiens



Above: 'Julian's Baby', another Whippet tank. These were among the quickest and most effective tanks of WWI

# 'MUSICAL BOX' TANK KEY

This humble key is the only survivor of a British tank that wreaked havoc behind German lines in 1918

**T**his key belonged to Clement Arnold, a British lieutenant in the 6th Battalion Tanks Corp, and is the last surviving piece of his Mk A Medium 'Whippet' Tank, which fought at the Battle of Amiens in 1918. Whippets were specifically designed to exploit breaches in battle lines created by the heavier tanks, such as the Mk I and its successors. In fact, the Whippet was twice as fast, with a top speed of 8.3 miles per hour, making it one of the fastest tanks of the war.

In August 1918, Arnold fought at the Battle of Amiens in his Whippet, which he and his crew had nicknamed 'Musical Box'. The Whippets were part of an offensive to break through the German lines and raise havoc in their rear while destroying large numbers of artillery. After other Whippets became knocked out, Arnold's Musical Box was suddenly isolated but the tank kept on fighting regardless.

Musical Box knocked out a four-gun Field Battery and then moved up to support the

60th Australian Infantry Brigade, which was pinned down at a railway line. For nine hours Arnold's tank roamed behind enemy lines and is credited with destroying not just the field battery, but also an infantry battalion camp and a transport column while inflicting hundreds of casualties. The Germans finally hit Musical Box and Arnold dragged his crew out of the burning tank. His driver, Private Carnie, was killed, while he and Gunner Ribbans were wounded and captured. Arnold later received the Distinguished Service Order for his daring actions.

**"FOR NINE HOURS ARNOLD'S TANK ROAMED BEHIND ENEMY LINES AND IS CREDITED WITH DESTROYING NOT JUST THE FIELD BATTERY, BUT ALSO AN INFANTRY BATTALION CAMP AND A TRANSPORT COLUMN WHILE INFLECTING HUNDREDS OF CASUALTIES"**

This artefact can be found at The Tank Museum, Bovington, Dorset, in its new exhibition on pioneering tank soldiers: 'Tank Men: The Story of the First Crews'. Find more information on the exhibition at: [www.tankmuseum.org](http://www.tankmuseum.org)

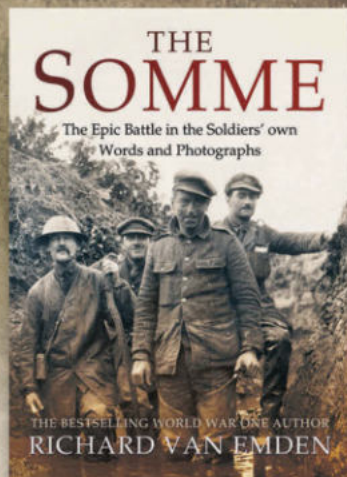
Images: Alamy, Bovington Tank Museum





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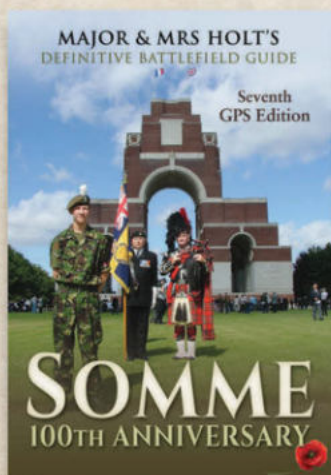
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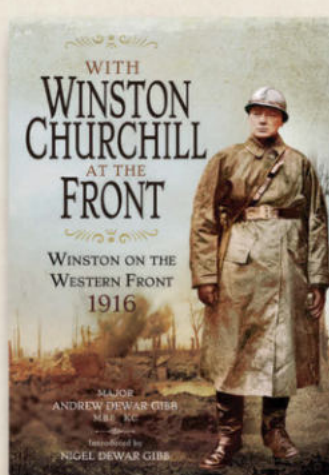
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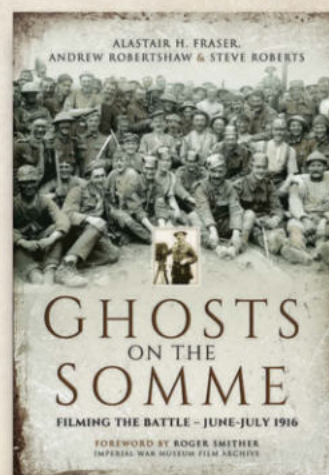
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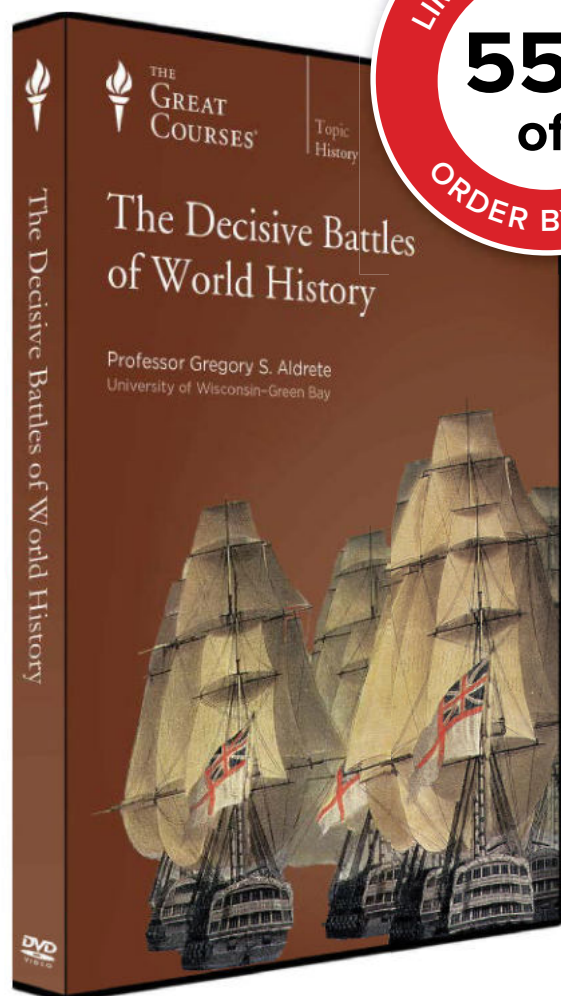
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